United Nations E/AC.51/2018/6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2018

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-eighth session
Organizational session, 19 April 2018
Substantive session, 4–29 June 2018*
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda**
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session (see A/37/38, para. 362) to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on evaluations submitted to the Committee. The triennial review determines the extent to which the six recommendations emanating from the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) by OIOS have been implemented.

The 2015 OIOS evaluation of UNHCR focused on one of the agency's priorities, namely durable solutions. UNHCR has taken significant steps to implement all of the six recommendations emanating from that evaluation. This triennial review determined that four recommendations have been implemented (recommendations 1–3 and 5) and two recommendations have been partially implemented (recommendations 4 and 6).

Since 2015, durable solutions have gained significant attention at the global level. In May 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit was held in Istanbul, and in September 2016, United Nations Member States adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Both events created international momentum to promote safe and durable solutions. With the New York Declaration, its comprehensive refugee response framework and the new multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, UNHCR not only developed and adopted global, regional and local advocacy tools to find solutions, it transitioned to a multi-year planning and funding approach for solutions, which was applied in a growing number of regions and

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
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countries. UNHCR also significantly enhanced collaboration with development partners, established a new Division of Resilience and Solutions, and strengthened the evidence base for decision-making around solutions. While still in the early stages, preliminary results of durable solutions were emerging at the field level as a consequence of the comprehensive refugee response framework and the multi-year multi-partner strategies.

Recommendation 1 addressed the need for UNHCR to implement a multi-year planning cycle for solutions-related activities and pursue multi-year funding. UNHCR had since introduced the multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, a multi-year planning tool for solutions-related activities. The strategies were tested and rolled out in more than 20 countries. UNHCR also enhanced its engagement with donors regarding multi-year funding, leading to a growing share of financial resources that exceeded a 12-month implementation period.

Recommendation 2 addressed the need for UNHCR to develop advocacy strategies for solutions at the global, regional and operational levels. The adoption of the New York Declaration, facilitated by UNHCR, was a global advocacy success, and it provided UNHCR with a powerful global advocacy tool for durable solutions, in the form of the comprehensive refugee response framework for finding specific durable solutions at the regional and country levels. It was applied in a growing number of regions and countries.

Recommendation 3 addressed the need for UNHCR to develop a schedule to ensure the conduct of regular, targeted meetings with development actors around a solutions/transition partnership coordination model. With the comprehensive refugee response framework, UNHCR had a coordination model to enhance the collaboration with development partners in specific country contexts. At the global level, UNHCR intensified collaborations with development partners, most notably the World Bank.

Recommendation 4 requested UNHCR to develop a staff development strategy to strengthen skills for creating, implementing and assessing solutions strategies. While UNHCR enhanced staff training for solutions, developed guidance material and revised job descriptions to include the solutions dimensions, a clear capacity-building strategy based on solutions was still lacking, posing an ongoing challenge.

Recommendation 5 requested UNHCR to review existing internal solutions structures to assess whether restructuring could improve effectiveness in programming. In 2016, the new High Commissioner mandated an organizational assessment of UNHCR headquarters. Subsequently, the High Commissioner endorsed the recommendation to create a new Division of Resilience and Solutions, which was established on 1 February 2018.

Recommendation 6 requested UNHCR to create an evidence-based portfolio to be used for advocating solutions. Since 2016, UNHCR had undertaken major efforts to strengthen the evidence base for solutions. However, there was neither a specific evaluation plan regarding solutions, nor a best practice portal, nor a research plan on solutions.

Three important changes remained to be fully implemented. First, while in-house capacities for solutions were built, more systematic and continued efforts were required in order to strengthen the skills for creating, implementing and assessing solutions strategies. Second, the new Division of Resilience and Solutions had yet to be made operational. Once fully functional, the new Division could potentially plan and coordinate evaluation and research activities for solutions at the organizational level. Third, there was a continued need to better organize and bring together documented experience on solutions in an easily accessible place. UNHCR concurred with these conclusions.

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session, in 2015, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, on the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (E/AC.51/2015/5).

2. The Committee expressed appreciation and high regard for the important work of UNHCR. Members of the Committee noted the increasingly complex environment in which UNHCR worked, the rising number of displaced persons and the prevalence of external challenges, including ongoing conflict and the lack of political will and funding. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 60 to 65 of the OIOS report on the evaluation of UNHCR.

3. This report was issued pursuant to a triennial review of the recommendations, and examined the status of implementation of the six recommendations contained in the report. The review also assessed whether implementation of the recommendations contributed to programme changes, and if so, to what extent.

4. The methodology for this triennial review included:

(a) A review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations, which were monitored through the OIOS recommendation database;

(b) An analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from UNHCR on various topics related to the recommendations;

(c) Interviews with a purposive sample of key UNHCR staff.

5. The report incorporates comments received from UNHCR during the drafting process. A final draft was shared with UNHCR, on which comments were received (see annex). OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation extended by UNHCR in the preparation of the present report.

II. Results

6. The mandate of UNHCR is to protect and assist refugees worldwide. UNHCR works to ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war or disaster at home. Approximately 17 million refugees are currently under the UNHCR mandate. UNHCR global strategic priorities are: (a) a favourable protection environment; (b) fair protection processes and documentation; (c) security from violence and exploitation; (d) basic needs and services; (e) community empowerment and self-reliance; and (f) durable solutions.[1]

7. The 2015 evaluation of UNHCR by OIOS focused on one of the agency's priorities, namely durable solutions. The ultimate goal of UNHCR was to achieve solutions and reduce the number of persons of concern. There were three primary durable solutions: (a) voluntary return; or (b) repatriation, resettlement to a third country; and/or (c) local integration into the host country (see E/AC.51/2015/5, para. 13). Since 2015, durable solutions have gained significant attention at the global level. In May 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul created an

[1] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "2016 global strategic priorities progress report", available at http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2016%20Global%20Strategic%20Priorities%20Progress%20Report.pdf.

international momentum to promote safe and durable solutions. In September 2016, United Nations Member States adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants with a strong commitment to finding long-term and sustainable solutions for refugees and migrants. The adoption of the New York Declaration was a milestone for refugee protection, as it marked a political commitment of unprecedented magnitude.[2] The changing global context had a significant impact on UNHCR and its approach to solutions, not least because UNHCR itself was at the forefront of the global debate. Most of all, it reinforced the commitment of Member States. UNHCR implementation of recommendations by OIOS was reviewed in this context.

8. OIOS made six recommendations to UNHCR: (1) implement multi-year planning and funding for solutions; (2) develop advocacy strategies for solutions; (3) enhance partnerships with development actors; (4) develop a staff strategy for strengthening solution activities; (5) conduct an assessment of the organizational structure with a view to finding solutions; and (6) create an evidence-based portfolio for solutions. Four recommendations were implemented (recommendations 1–3 and 5), while two were partially implemented (recommendations 4 and 6), with some evidence of concrete positive outcomes resulting from these. The implementation status of each of the six recommendations is discussed below.

Recommendation 1
Implement multi-year planning and funding for solutions

9. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

> **Implement a multi-year planning cycle for solutions-related activities and pursue multi-year funding.** While enabling greater responsiveness to emergencies, the current one-year planning and funding cycle does not adequately support the achievement of longer-term objectives required for solutions. The existence of longer-term planning frameworks would not preclude shorter-term planning for other programming. It is, however, recognized that this recommendation would require changes to the programmatic, administrative and human resource configuration of UNHCR operations for protracted refugee situations. UNHCR should:
>
> (a) Develop and implement operational-level initiatives for protracted refugee situations with a view to designing a three-year framework and planning template, including needs analyses, partnerships models, benchmarks and targets and regular monitoring mechanisms, at the global, regional and operational levels;
>
> (b) Engage in advocacy with donors regarding multi-year funding and restructure the global appeals process to incorporate longer-term funding needs.
>
> ***Indicator of achievement***: planning framework template produced.

10. The evaluation report indicated that UNHCR operated under an annual planning and funding cycle, which enabled adjustment to needs as they arose in new or continuing crises. The short-term nature of the cycle was identified as a constraint to solutions programming, which has longer-term outcomes (E/AC.51/2015/5, para. 48). The solutions process and the mandate of UNHCR to remain engaged until solutions were found necessitated more development-oriented programming and longer-term planning than standard humanitarian operations, including a collaborative approach with development actors. While UNHCR achieved some gains in adapting its structure and thinking to accommodate the development dimensions, it was still

[2] UNHCR, "UNHCR welcomes 'unprecedented force and resonance' of New York Declaration", press release, 19 September 2016.

largely operating under a humanitarian service delivery model. The recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to capitalize on opportunities to implement a systematic sustainable solutions-oriented approach.

11. In 2016, UNHCR launched the multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies. The objective of the strategies was to address the economic, legal, sociocultural and civil-political dimensions necessary to secure solutions for populations of concern. The strategies had a three- to five-year timespan. UNHCR developed a template for country-level operations to prepare the strategies, including a situation analysis, a vision and strategic objectives, as well as information on key stakeholders, partnerships, resources, management, milestones, assumptions and risks. In parallel, UNHCR produced a document entitled "Supporting notes for operations developing a multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy" to provide UNHCR operations with guidance on how to develop such a strategy.

12. UNHCR operations in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania developed and started implementing these new multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies in 2016. These pilots provided an opportunity to test novel approaches to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of solutions programmes.[3] Early lessons learned from the initial pilots were gathered and analysed in 2017.[4] One of the key lessons learned was that longer-term strategizing had fostered "impact thinking" — thinking focused on long-term results — and allowed better planning for protection and solutions. The lessons learned from the pilots strongly recommended the establishment of multi-year, multi-partner strategizing as an organizational standard to increase UNHCR strategic capacity, predictability to partners and impact on the lives of people of concern. Subsequently, UNHCR decided that it should gradually move towards fully adopting multi-year planning for all its operations. Seventeen additional strategies were planned in 2017 with all UNHCR operations expected to have such strategies by 2020 (EC/68/SC/CRP.25, para. 15).

13. Discussions with donors on multi-year funding took place in several forums, principally linked to the follow-up on the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing adopted at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016.[5] The Grand Bargain aims to reduce the humanitarian financing gap by improving the delivery and efficiency of aid. A total of 52 donors and aid organizations, which accounted for the lion's share of the international humanitarian response, had endorsed the Grand Bargain, with multi-year funding being one of the key commitments of the signatories. UNHCR was also a signatory of the Grand Bargain,[6] and it reported to its Executive Committee on progress towards implementing its Grand Bargain commitments (EC/68/SC/CRP.25). According to the 2016 Global Report,[7] 15 per cent of UNHCR contributions in that year were part of multi-year contributions covering more than 12 months, and the percentage of contributions for solutions that required more than 12 months to implement had also increased.

14. With the adoption of multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, UNHCR introduced a multi-year planning tool for solutions-related activities, which was tested in a few countries and thereafter rolled out to more countries. In parallel, UNHCR engaged with donors regarding increasing multi-year

[3] EC/67/SC/CRP.14, paras. 11–12.

[4] UNHCR, "Multi-year multi-partner pilot operations lessons learned report", multi-year multi-partner core team, August 2017.

[5] The Grand Bargain is a package of reforms that seeks to reduce the financing gap by improving the delivery and efficiency of aid.

[6] Andras Derzsi-Horvath, Julia Steets and Lotte Ruppert, "Independent Grand Bargain report" (Berlin, Global Public Policy Institute, 2017).

[7] UNHCR, "Global report 2016" (Geneva, 2016), p. 32.

funding and initiated a process to collect information that would allow it to demonstrate the positive impact that multi-year planning and funding was expected to bring to its operations. The aim was to use this information to advocate for increased multi-year financial contributions (EC/68/SC/CRP.25, para. 16). However, UNHCR staff interviewed indicated that it was too early to assess the outcomes of the strategies, as this approach was still rather new to the agency.

15. This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 2
Develop advocacy strategies for solutions

16. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

> **Develop advocacy strategies for solutions at the global, regional and operational levels.** Effective advocacy at the global and operational levels is critical. Clear, sound and unified messages facilitate more effective communication with Governments and make full use of the political capital of UNHCR to assist in achieving solutions.
>
> ***Indicator of achievement***: global strategy document and operation-level strategies for certain operations in place.

17. The recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to fully capitalize on opportunities to manoeuvre within the complex environments in which it worked. Most significantly, UNHCR had not consistently engaged in strategic advocacy with host Governments regarding local integration measures as a viable solution for refugees. Internal and external stakeholders saw greater advocacy with host countries at the national, regional and local levels as the primary approach for improving solution results. Stakeholders at the time of the evaluation also expressed the view that in order to address some of the obstacles to achieving solutions, enhanced advocacy could be undertaken with: (a) donors for increased and more flexible funding; (b) resettlement countries for higher quotas; and (c) countries of origin to develop more welcoming environments for returnees (E/AC.51/2015/5, para. 38).

18. On 19 September 2016, the General Assembly held a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants to discuss the ways in which the international community could improve its response to large movements of refugees and migrants. At the summit, all 193 Member States unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. UNHCR viewed the New York Declaration, a political declaration, as very important and a key turning point in terms of advocacy for durable solutions. In the Declaration, Member States stated:

> "We commit to working towards solutions from the outset of a refugee situation. We will actively promote durable solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations, with a focus on sustainable and timely return in safety and dignity. This will encompass repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. We encourage Member States and other relevant actors to provide support through, inter alia, the allocation of funds."[8]

The New York Declaration, of which UNHCR was the main facilitator, was a global advocacy success for solutions. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated that the Declaration "marks a political commitment of unprecedented force and resonance" and "fills what has been a perennial gap in the international refugee

[8] General Assembly resolution 71/1, para. 75.

protection system — that of truly sharing responsibility for refugees, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter."[9]

19. To find durable solutions at the operational level, the New York Declaration was supplemented with the comprehensive refugee response framework. UNHCR was tasked by Member States to develop and initiate a comprehensive refugee response framework and in doing so, engage with Member States and consult with all relevant stakeholders.[10] The framework was to be applied in all large-scale refugee situations and carried out through a multi-partner process to map the needs and capabilities of refugees, their host communities and the systems that serviced them. Following the mapping, a response strategy was put in place, taking into account in a comprehensive manner contributions from the refugee communities, ministries, local governance systems, humanitarian and development partners as well as the private sector.[11] The objectives of the comprehensive refugee response framework were:[12]

- to ease pressures on the host countries involved
- to enhance refugee self-reliance
- to expand access to third-country solutions
- to support conditions in countries of origin for return with safety and dignity

20. As of January 2018, the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework was initiated by 13 States: Belize, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Mexico, Panama, Somalia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. These were advocacy strategies for durable solutions at the operational level. For example, in Uganda, the Uganda comprehensive refugee response framework road map 2018–2020, endorsed on 31 January 2018, sets out the vision and strategic guidance on framework implementation in Uganda. The framework was fully initiated by the Government of Uganda, which assumed full leadership of the process with the support of UNHCR, and was launched in the country on 24 March 2017. To enable a comprehensive refugee response, the framework built on approaches that already existed in Uganda and addressed five themes: admission and rights; emergency response and ongoing needs; the resilience and self-reliance of refugees; the expansion of solutions through resettlement and complementary pathways; and voluntary repatriation. "Through the comprehensive refugee response framework governance structure, Uganda seeks to create a more predictable and sustainable approach to refugee management, respond more efficiently to the refugee emergency, and accelerate the implementation of the Government's Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE)[13] strategy. The underfunding of humanitarian response and the refugee-hosting districts facing major development issues were the main challenges of implementing the framework in Uganda".[14]

21. There were early successes in the practical application of the comprehensive refugee response framework since the New York Declaration, which UNHCR mapped in a progress report of 8 December 2017. Examples of the application of the

[9] UNHCR, "UNHCR welcomes 'unprecedented force and resonance' of New York Declaration".
[10] General Assembly resolution 71/1, annex I, paras. 2 and 18.
[11] UNHCR, "Supporting notes for operations developing a multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy", 2016, p. 3.
[12] General Assembly resolution 71/1, annex I, para. 18.
[13] The refugee and host population empowerment strategy provided a national framework for integrated and holistic support to refugees and host populations and was incorporated into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
[14] UNHCR, "Applying the comprehensive refugee response framework: overview — Uganda", October 2017.

framework included: (a) the new education policy for Djibouti, which enabled refugee children to be included in the national curriculum; and (b) the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and the Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia, which was a regional initiative that helped shape the official narrative in host countries so that the positive contributions made by refugees to their societies were highlighted.[15] This was a significant success, given the challenging political environment.

22. With the New York Declaration and the comprehensive refugee response framework, UNHCR had a global advocacy tool for durable solutions and a tool for developing joint response advocacy strategies at the regional and operational level, to be applied in a growing number of regions and countries. This recommendation has been implemented, with advocacy for durable solutions continuing to be an ongoing task for UNHCR, as it was prior to the adoption of the New York Declaration.

Recommendation 3
Enhance partnerships with development actors

23. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

> **Develop a schedule to ensure the conduct of regular, targeted meetings with development actors around a solutions/transition partnership coordination model.** Given that there are existing coordination models for emergency response, a model for solutions and the transition to development would clarify roles, enable joint programming and provide greater integration of refugee issues into national development programmes and priorities. UNHCR should schedule and conduct meetings with key development partners within and beyond the United Nations to develop that model.
>
> ***Indicator of achievement***: scheduled initial meeting, followed by quarterly meetings, regarding the development of the model.

24. This recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to utilize partnerships and engagement with stakeholders on solutions to advance solutions objectives. The work of UNHCR with its United Nations partners had not been rated highly by the staff surveyed during the evaluation, who indicated that partnerships with the United Nations country teams and non-governmental organizations could be more strategic, especially insofar as the transition to development was concerned. Improving partnerships, especially with development actors, was seen by UNHCR staff as key for improving the ability of UNHCR to achieve durable solutions (E/AC.51/2015/5, paras. 51, 52).

25. During the period from 2015 to 2017, the collaboration between humanitarian and development agencies built on the changes brought about at the global level by the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, including the comprehensive refugee response framework. The World Humanitarian Summit recognized that:

> "... a new way of working is required that supports the leadership and capacity of national and local actors; that brings humanitarian and development actors together to work toward collective outcomes that not only meet needs but aim to reduce them".[16]

The comprehensive refugee response framework stated that:

[15] UNHCR, "Practical application of the comprehensive refugee Response Framework: preliminary progress update", 8 December 2017, table 1, and para. 25.

[16] "Commitments to action", World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul, 23–24 May 2016.

> "Host States, in cooperation with the UNHCR and other United Nations entities, financial institutions and other relevant partners, would, as appropriate: ensure close cooperation and encourage joint planning, as appropriate, between humanitarian and development actors and other relevant actors."[17]

26. With the comprehensive refugee response framework, UNHCR and its partners found a solutions/transition partnership coordination model. UNHCR established a task team for the framework, which was responsible for its practical application. Notably, half of the team members were from other agencies, including development partners such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

27. The collaboration between the World Bank and UNHCR was further strengthened following the completion of the 2015 evaluation. What started in 2009 and accelerated in 2013 was instrumental for the establishment of the $2 billion refugee and host community subwindow of the eighteenth financing replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA 18) in December 2016.[18] At the time of the triennial review, eight countries — Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Niger, Pakistan and Uganda — were considered eligible to access financing from the subwindow. In support of the IDA-18 refugee subwindow, UNHCR and the World Bank had undertaken 11 joint missions in 2017. These included a joint mission to the United Republic of Tanzania to look at the protracted displacement context and to Bangladesh to assess the policy and programmatic challenges of the Rohingya refugee situation. Another result of the partnership was the agreement to establish a joint data centre on forced displacement by the end of 2018, with the objective of enabling a better informed and more sustainable response to forced displacement, which would underpin a coordinated humanitarian-development approach.[19]

28. The collaboration between UNHCR and UNDP had also strengthened during the three years prior to the current review. In a joint letter from the UNDP Administrator and the High Commissioner, dated 30 October 2017, to the staff of both agencies, UNDP and UNHCR stressed the importance of the close collaboration between the two agencies and highlighted a number of areas in which cooperation should be strengthened, in particular the inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons in national and local development programmes. A study commissioned by UNHCR and UNDP[20] found that the most important regional and country level collaboration between the two agencies was the Syrian Arab Republic crisis regional refugee resilience plan, which framed the United Nations response to displacement in five countries and attempted to reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus. Another multi-partner initiative that UNHCR joined in March 2017 was the joint global focal point arrangement for police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations. The arrangement was co-chaired by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP, and its partners included UN-Women, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNHCR.

29. Further examples demonstrated the enhanced collaboration of UNHCR with development partners, such as the joint action plan for 2017 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR, which was aimed, inter alia, at

[17] General Assembly resolution 71/1, annex I, para. 7 (e).

[18] Every three years, donors meet to replenish the resources of the International Development Association (IDA), which is the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries. The eighteenth such replenishment, IDA 18, was finalized in December 2016.

[19] See www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/10/59ea0f984/new-world-bank-unhcr-joint-data-centre-improve-global-statistics-forced.html.

[20] Simon-Lawry White, "Defining UNDP-UNHCR collaboration in key areas of work", study commissioned by UNHCR and UNDP, October 2017.

strengthening technical support to ILO and UNHCR field operations and programmes to increase employment, income and livelihoods opportunities and social protection for refugees and other persons of concern for UNHCR.

30. This recommendation has been implemented with the UNHCR rollout of the comprehensive refugee response framework as a coordination model, with the various intensified collaborations with development partners going beyond what the recommendation required.

Recommendation 4
Develop staff strategy for strengthening solution activities

31. Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

> **Develop a staff development strategy to strengthen skills for creating, implementing and assessing solutions strategies.** Emergency and humanitarian response skills are critical to achieving the goals of the organization; however, solutions activities require new skills. They can be acquired by:
>
> (a) Creating a staff development strategy focused on secondments and on the job training with development partners and providing training on solutions planning, livelihoods, early recovery and transition, advocacy and implementation of development projects, including monitoring and evaluation;
>
> (b) Developing and/or revising solutions and resilience job descriptions;
>
> (c) Requiring continuing leadership training focused on advocacy and negotiation skills.
>
> ***Indicators of achievement***: staff development strategy, revised job descriptions and training implemented.

32. The recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to develop related staff skills and competencies in order to achieve solutions. UNHCR staffing structures, tools and resources were aligned with the traditional humanitarian service delivery models, which left little flexibility for more innovative development and solutions-oriented structures. Expertise in livelihoods and vocational training were limited. Also, relationships with host Governments to facilitate solutions often depended on personality factors, highlighting a need for increased diplomacy and advocacy skills among representatives and other senior staff (E/AC.51/2015/5, paras. 49, 50).

33. UNHCR did not develop a unified staff development strategy to strengthen skills for creating, implementing and assessing solutions strategies. However, several efforts were made to strengthen UNHCR staff capacity in the area of durable solutions, most notably through a joint UNHCR-World Bank training. The objective of the training was to better equip the staff of UNHCR and of the World Bank to engage with each other in view of the increasing interaction between the two agencies in the context of IDA 18[21] and the subwindow for refugees. In 2017, 122 UNHCR senior and technical staff (1 per cent of the total staff workforce) from headquarters and 18 operations[22] were provided with training in, inter alia, development responses to forced displacement and how to strengthen partnerships. The staff interviewed indicated that the training had not only built a common purpose, but was also helpful in establishing personal relationships between the staff of the two organizations,

[21] Replenishment of resources of the International Development Association.

[22] Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

which in turn helped to strengthen the partnership and the search for durable solutions.

34. Additionally, capacity-building for solutions was related to the roll-out of the multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy. UNHCR prepared guidance material and a template for UNHCR operations to develop such strategies.[23] These were shared with the relevant field operations, and related training was conducted. The new approach was subsequently implemented in several countries (see recommendation 1 above). However, the staff interviewed indicated that, while extensive training on solutions for many staff had been conducted over the past few years, and while there was in-house expertise on solutions, more capacity-building was required, because while not all staff members needed to become solutions experts, every UNHCR staff member should have some understanding of solutions strategies.

35. To further strengthen solutions-related activities, staff job descriptions related to solutions were amended to explicitly include a solutions component, in particular for resettlement officers, protection officers and, most appropriately, durable solutions officers. Solution functions included in a sample of job descriptions are illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1
Sample of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees job descriptions with a solutions component

Job descriptions	*Typical functions related to solutions*
Resettlement Officer	"Contribute to the development and enhancement of strategies and mechanisms to address the resettlement needs of persons of concern in the context of comprehensive solution strategies."[a]
Protection Officer	"Ensure provision of durable solutions, through voluntary repatriation, local integration and, where appropriate, resettlement to the largest possible number of persons of concern."[b]
Senior Durable Solutions Officer for Somalia	"Coordinate the design and implementation of a comprehensive durable solutions strategy for Somalis in Somalia and in the region, with a view to finding durable solutions to the maximum number of persons of concern."[c]

[a] http://www.unhcr.org/525fcae09.pdf.
[b] http://www.unhcr.org/5242dcc89.pdf.
[c] http://www.unhcr.org/53d612d29.pdf.

36. Although UNHCR lacked a clear capacity-building strategy focused on solutions, this recommendation has been partially implemented through the efforts to strengthen staff capacity through training and revised job descriptions, a view shared by UNHCR.

[23] UNHCR, "Supporting notes for operations developing a multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategy", 2016, p. 3.

Recommendation 5
Conduct assessment of organizational structure for solutions

27. Recommendation 5 reads as follows:

> **Review existing internal solutions structures to assess whether restructuring could improve effectiveness in programming.** Solutions responsibilities currently fall under three divisions and across units at the operational level. An internal reconfiguration at the headquarters and field levels, resulting in a high-level integrated approach with an operational focus, may give greater prominence to solutions programming and clarify roles, responsibilities and internal coordination.
>
> ***Indicator of achievement***: assessment report of solutions structure produced.

28. The recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to capitalize on opportunities to implement a sustainable solutions-oriented approach systematically (E/AC.51/2015/5, para. 42). While UNHCR had made some gains in shifting its structure to accommodate the development dimension, it was still largely operating under a humanitarian service delivery model. UNHCR staffing structures, tools and resources were also aligned with humanitarian service delivery models, which were seen as factors constraining achieving solutions. Solutions programming was split between protection and programme units in field operations: resettlement and registration staff were generally part of protection units, whereas livelihoods and other resilience activities fell under programme units. While that model was applicable to the traditional mandates of UNHCR, it left little flexibility for more innovative development and solutions-oriented structures (ibid.).

29. In 2016, the new High Commissioner mandated an organizational assessment of UNHCR headquarters to provide a comprehensive picture of the design, structure and underlying processes at headquarters. The main purpose of the review was a strategic realignment of the functions and systems at headquarters to ensure that these were functioning optimally in support of UNHCR field operations. The results of the rapid organizational assessment were presented in February 2017. With regard to solutions, the following recommendation was made:

> "UNHCR should establish a division for solutions, reporting to the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. This would enable the organization to adopt an integrated approach to solutions and build on traditional in-house expertise on durable solutions while continuing to pursue solutions beyond traditional ones."[24]

30. The High Commissioner endorsed the recommendation and decided to create a new Division of Solutions, which would incorporate certain key capacities that were located in the Division of Programme Support and Management[25] and the Division of International Protection.[26] The new Division would report to the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. The High Commissioner stressed that "while this effort will require careful calibration, including to define its scope and relationship with existing entities, I am convinced that the new Division will enable us to reinforce and elevate our strategic focus on solutions".[27]

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[24] UNHCR, "Headquarters review: rapid organisational assessment", February 2017, recommendation 14.

[25] The Operational Solutions and Transition Section promotes durable solutions for refugees through support to field operations and the strengthening of key linkages with development actors.

[26] Comprehensive Solutions Unit, supports regional bureaux and field offices in the design, development and implementation of comprehensive protection and solutions strategies.

[27] Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner, email to UNHCR staff at Headquarters and in the field.

41. A new Division of Resilience and Solutions, under the leadership of the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, was established on 1 February 2018. The objective of the new Division was described as supporting regional bureaux and field operations in developing comprehensive solutions strategies and ensuring that all UNHCR efforts to build protection and provide support to refugees and the internally displaced were underpinned by the aim of building resilience and working towards solutions. Senior staff interviewed indicated that the new Division was expected to help to advance solutions as a UNHCR priority, that it was an important in-house signal to this effect, and that it could help to unlock the potential available in UNHCR and among partners to find durable solutions.

42. This recommendation has been implemented. UNHCR will need time to determine the full impact of the new structure on solutions.

Recommendation 6
Create an evidence-based portfolio for solutions

43. Recommendation 6 reads as follows:

> **Create an evidence-based portfolio to be used for strengthening and advocating solutions, including by:**
>
> (a) Conducting regular systematic assessments of solutions initiatives;
>
> (b) Strengthening the documentation and dissemination of lessons learned and/or best practices;
>
> (c) Initiating or strengthening partnerships with academic institutions to answer key questions through research and guide development and advocacy initiatives in relation to solutions strategies.
>
> ***Indicators of achievement***: evaluation plan for solutions initiatives, best practices portal and research plan with academic partners established.

44. The recommendation addressed the need for UNHCR to generate sufficient evidence to inform national decision-making and policy formulation around solutions, such as the positive contributions made by refugees to the economies and social stability of host States, including through employment creation for nationals. The evaluation report indicated that evidence-based examples of positive outcomes may facilitate more effective dialogue with national Governments where political will had been lacking, especially in advocating local integration (E/AC.51/2015/5, para. 39).

45. UNHCR staff emphasized that they worked towards durable solutions for refugees as part of the UNHCR mandate and therefore, an assessment of solutions was an integral part of every country programme. Durable solutions were systematically assessed as part of all country programme evaluations. Therefore, UNHCR did not require an evaluation plan specifically for solutions. The evaluation plan of the UNHCR Evaluation Service encompassed the assessment of solutions as part of the regular country programme evaluations.

46. A review of a sample of the recent evaluations commissioned by UNHCR indicated that durable solutions were included in country programme evaluations. Examples of country evaluations are indicated in Table 2 below.

30 March 2017.

Table 2
Durable solutions, an integral part of country programme evaluations

Country programme evaluation	*Examples of durable solutions*
Evaluation of the UNHCR Ukraine country programme, commissioned by the UNHCR Evaluation Service, conducted by Universalia, 2017	Finding 10: "In Ukraine, UNHCR has implemented several solutions-oriented activities, but did not have a formal internally displaced persons solutions strategy."
Evaluation of the UNHCR emergency response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey, commissioned by the UNHCR Evaluation Service, conducted by Universalia, 2016	Finding 38: "Durable solutions are still a distant prospect for refugees in Turkey, and the default path of longer stay in Turkey, with temporary status but most economic and social rights, seems the most likely."
Evaluation of the UNHCR response to the level 3 South Sudan refugee crisis in Uganda and Ethiopia, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2016	Recommendation 16: "Develop an action plan for strengthening access to post-primary education for refugee children and adolescents in line with UNHCR objective to achieve integration into national services and in light of possible durable solutions."

47. While UNHCR documented experiences in the area of solutions, they did not have a best practices portal or a research plan on durable solutions. During the period from 2015 to 2017, UNHCR worked with the World Bank to produce a number of major studies documenting the experience in several countries, thereby broadening the evidence base that supported decision-making. Examples of these experiences are indicated in table 3 below. All three examples of the studies analysed addressed durable solutions and the nexus between humanitarian work and development cooperation.

Table 3
Durable solutions: UNHCR and World Bank documented experiences

Study	*About the study*
World Bank/UNHCR, "'Yes' in my back yard? The economics of refugees and their social dynamics in Kakuma, Kenya", 2016	"Therefore, with plenty of original analytical and empirical analyses, this report, conducted jointly by the World Bank and UNHCR, attempts to address this pressing need. It aims to strengthen the evidence base so that policymakers, and humanitarian and development actors, can make informed decisions about how best to transform refugee camps such as Kakuma into self-sustaining settlements, and how to design win-win deals that benefit both refugee and host populations."
World Bank/UNHCR, "The welfare of Syrian refugees: evidence from Jordan and Lebanon", 2016	"UNHCR and the World Bank Group are working together to analyse this evidence, and to ensure that policymakers and advocates have the knowledge they need to better serve refugee communities. The World Bank Group know-how on welfare and targeting, combined with the UNHCR expertise on the needs of refugees, can lead to more effective analyses and policies for registered Syrian refugees living in Jordan and Lebanon."

Study	*About the study*
	"This book is the result of a comprehensive collaboration between the two institutions. It aims to increase our understanding and ultimately improve the well-being of Syrian refugees."
World Bank, "Forcibly displaced: toward a development approach supporting refugees, the internally displaced and their hosts", 2017	"The study recommends ways to help the forcibly displaced access jobs and opportunities. Produced in partnership with UNHCR, the study outlines how we can build resilience while supporting inclusive and sustainable growth in host countries."

48. Additionally, UNHCR and the World Bank agreed to establish a joint data centre to improve global statistics on forced displacement, refugees, other displaced people and host communities. It was expected that the data centre would be operational in 2018. The objective of the new centre was defined to enable a better-informed and more sustainable response to forced displacement, which would underpin a coordinated humanitarian-development approach. It was expected to build on the role of UNHCR as the reference institution for refugee data, bringing in the World Bank Group's analytical expertise and experience in helping national Governments improve statistical capacity.[28]

49. In 2017, UNHCR embarked on a multi-year longitudinal evaluation on humanitarian-development cooperation, called the Luxembourg project. This research project supported an evidence base and documentation for engaging with development actors to leverage their analytical, technical and financial capabilities to better respond to the needs of refugees, other forcibly displaced persons and host communities. The multi-year research project is expected to provide robust cumulative evidence to provide information to UNHCR on ways of working in the longer term.[29]

50. In 2017, UNHCR prepared a report on lessons learned from the multi-year, multi-partner pilot operations and discussed the main lessons learned from the pilot strategies.[30]

51. While UNHCR undertook major efforts to strengthen the evidence base for solutions that could be used for further advocacy, there was no specific evaluation plan regarding solutions, no best practices portal and no research plan on solutions. There remained scope to bring the different documented experiences together in order to provide an easily accessible portal to past evaluations and research activities. At the same time, a research plan of scheduled research and evaluation activities on solutions would be beneficial to efforts to generate synergies and avoid duplication. The new Division of Resilience and Solutions could potentially be tasked with establishing the portal of documented experience and a research plan of scheduled research and evaluation activities.

52. This recommendation has been partially implemented.

[28] www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/10/59ea0f984/new-world-bank-unhcr-joint-data-centre-improve-global-statistics-forced.html

[29] UNHCR, "Multi-year longitudinal evaluation on humanitarian-development cooperation ("Luxembourg project")", 2017.

[30] UNHCR, "Multi-year multi-partner pilot operations, lessons learned report", 2017.

III. Conclusion

53. UNHCR took significant steps to implement all recommendations contained in the OIOS evaluation of 2015. With the New York Declaration, the comprehensive refugee response framework and the multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, UNHCR had not only developed and adopted global, regional and local advocacy tools to find solutions, it was also clearly shifting to a multi-year planning and funding approach for solutions, which was being applied to a growing number of regions and countries. At the same time, UNHCR significantly enhanced collaboration with development partners such as the World Bank and significantly strengthened the evidence base for decision-making around solutions. While still at an early stage, preliminary results were emerging at the field level as a consequence of the framework and the multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies. Another positive indicator was the growing share of financial resources that exceeded a 12-month implementation period.

54. Three important changes remained to be fully implemented; (a) while in-house capacities for solutions were built, continued and more systematic efforts were required in order to strengthen skills for creating, implementing and assessing solutions strategies; (b) the recently established Division of Resilience and Solutions had yet to be made operational which, once fully functional, could potentially plan and coordinate evaluation and research activities for solutions at the corporate level; and (c) there was a continued need to better organize and bring together documented experience around solutions in an easily accessible place.

(*Signed*) Heidi **Mendoza**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2018

Annex*

Comments received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the formal draft report of the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations of the programme evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Pursuing durable solutions for refugees is a core component of the mandate of UNHCR, along with providing international protection. We are pleased to see that OIOS has noted that UNHCR has taken several measures to create, implement and strengthen solutions strategies since the evaluation. Indeed, the report effectively recognizes that UNHCR actions have, to a notable degree, exceeded that required by the recommendations.

The situation has evolved considerably since the time of the evaluation. Processes at the political, policy and operational level, including the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework, the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, the ongoing reform of the United Nations Development System, and bilateral partnerships with the World Bank Group and UNDP have all in different ways informed the way in which UNHCR work on solutions is now carried out. As a result, UNHCR strategic engagement and execution of efforts on solutions has shifted toward a more coordinated, inclusive and catalytic approach.

As noted in the review report, the comprehensive refugee response framework provides an overall framework and platform for increased collaboration and partnerships toward a "whole-of-society" response to solutions. Given the different aspects of solutions, and the need for strategies adapted to the many different environments in which UNHCR operates, there is no single model or approach. Rather, the framework enables UNHCR to take different contexts and aspects of solutions into account in developing bespoke models, as applicable and desirable, in order to advance appropriate solutions globally and in specific operations.

In keeping with these many developments, UNHCR is currently undertaking deeper structural and programmatic reforms, including those noted in the report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Our investments in improving registration data, results-based management and programme planning in sectors such as energy, education, livelihoods and protection monitoring are in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the principle of "leave no one behind". These reforms will enable UNHCR to fulfil its core mandate more effectively and efficiently, including towards durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced and stateless people.

UNHCR therefore acknowledges and appreciates the positive comments made about the efforts made to implement all six recommendations of the OIOS evaluation. In particular, it appreciates that four of the six recommendations are considered implemented. With reference to the first recommendation, UNHCR appreciates the efforts of many donors to provide multi-year funding. However, the bulk of support for UNHCR continues to be received on an annual basis.

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services presents the full text of comments received from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

Regarding the other two recommendations, UNHCR concurs that these are partially implemented. However, the specific actions and indicators proposed by the evaluation, namely the development of a staff development strategy (recommendation 4) and the creation of an evaluation or research plan and best practices portal (recommendation 6) regarding solutions, need to be viewed within the larger context described above.

Building staff capacities and skills is an ongoing systematic effort that is progressing on multiple fronts. Overall, it is important to bear in mind that the design of solutions is not a straightforward technical task to which standard operating procedures can be applied. Necessarily, any capacity-building strategy must also reflect this complexity. UNHCR has made substantial and systematic progress through a number of related efforts. First, the organization has steadily increased its capacity to engage with development partners and private sector partners. Second, UNHCR has reflected a focus on solutions in the job descriptions of protection officers and created new positions, such as comprehensive refugee response framework officers and development advisers, at various levels. Third, the newly created Division of Resilience and Solutions presents an opportunity to bring together strands of related work on solutions into a cohesive whole, including the various competencies within the organization that work on solutions.

UNHCR is pleased to inform the Committee on Programme and Coordination that the new Division of Resilience and Solutions was formed on 1 February 2018 and is expected to be fully operational in the coming months. The Division has developed its objectives and vision, created an organization chart and assigned staff and is conducting an annual planning and budgeting process.

In terms of creating an evidence-based portfolio and a research and evaluation plan regarding solutions, UNHCR is undertaking several reforms related to data, results-based management and evaluation. The UNHCR work on solutions does not stand alone, and evidence generated on protection, sectoral programming and assistance is linked to and touches on aspects of solutions.

The new Division of Resilience and Solutions will indeed take on appropriate research work, while the responsibility for evaluation will remain with the Evaluation Service. Therefore, the UNHCR Evaluation Service prepares an annual evaluation plan and continues to strengthen its monitoring of programming in areas essential to measuring the extent of achievement of solutions, including in education, energy, health and livelihoods.

Similarly, efforts to build best practices, increase knowledge management and disseminate evidence in relation to solutions are undertaken together with other related efforts, and not in isolation. UNHCR is rolling out new web portals for various sectors available to all stakeholders, sharing lessons learned and best practices in a number of forums and investing in data and evidence on forced displacement. The synthesis and collation of such evidence and research rests with the various divisions and with the Evaluation Service.

United Nations E/AC.51/2018/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2018

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-eighth session
Organizational session, 19 April 2018
Substantive session, 4–29 June 2018*
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda**
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session (see A/37/38, para. 362) to review the implementation of its recommendations three years after taking decisions on the evaluations submitted to the Committee. The present triennial review determined the extent to which the six recommendations emanating from the OIOS programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) were implemented.

The recommendations addressed various aspects of ECLAC relevance and effectiveness in executing its mandate. At the conclusion of its fifty-fifth session, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the OIOS evaluation report. The triennial review determined that three recommendations (recommendations 1, 3 and 5) were implemented, while three recommendations (recommendations 2, 4 and 6) were partially implemented. The full impact of the implementation of the six recommendations thus far could not be assessed as ECLAC had not yet fully operationalized some of the recommended policies and frameworks. For the recommendations that were implemented, some evidence of concrete positive outcomes was noted.

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
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Recommendation 1 addressed the need for ECLAC to review its strategies and structure to more effectively identify synergies in its programme structure and design its strategies to better respond to the thematic priorities, given the reality of resource constraints. ECLAC indicated that assessing its strategies and structure to achieve this aim was an ongoing management process rather than a one-time exercise based on a specific document. To implement the recommendation, an ECLAC interdivisional working group met to ensure the alignment of ECLAC activities with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An important realignment and restructuring was proposed in the strategic framework for ECLAC for 2018–2019: the integration of subprogramme 4, Financing for development, with subprogramme 3, Macroeconomic policies and growth. The impact of this merger will be evident following its implementation in 2018.

Recommendation 2 addressed the need for ECLAC to develop a country-by-country strategy as ECLAC did not maintain regular communications and effective liaison relationships with officials in all relevant technical ministries throughout the region, resulting in low awareness of and access to ECLAC outputs among stakeholders. ECLAC developed a draft knowledge management strategy to increase the effectiveness of ECLAC knowledge dissemination, overhauled its website and launched a digital repository. The strategy has yet to be approved. In addition, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was used as a new platform for ECLAC to engage with member State representatives to identify countries' specific demands and needs for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This resulted in positive developments and helped the Commission to reshape its programme of work to respond to country needs. However, ECLAC did not institute annual consultations with individual member States.

Recommendation 3 addressed the need for ECLAC to formalize mechanisms to incorporate the priorities of the Caribbean member States, as reflected in the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), into divisional work programmes. At the thirty-sixth session of the Commission in 2016, appreciation was expressed for the support provided by the ECLAC secretariat to the members of CDCC. In 2017, ECLAC further implemented the recommendation by issuing an internal memorandum as a guidance note, advising Directors of selected subprogrammes to take specific CDCC decisions and resolutions into account in their current and future work programmes. An important follow-up to this was the establishment of the Caribbean debt for climate adaptation swap initiative in 2017. As formal guidance was issued only in 2017, it was not possible in the review to assess its impact on the integration of support for Caribbean priorities, including in the work of ECLAC headquarters divisions.

Recommendation 4 addressed the need for ECLAC to develop an outreach strategy to improve the dissemination and promotion of ECLAC publications as ECLAC had not fully ensured that the relevant knowledge products were reaching national policymakers and other audiences. To monitor access to publications and other information outputs, the ECLAC Publications and Web Services Division tracked visits to the ECLAC website using appropriate analytical tools. This allowed ECLAC to monitor the number of users and page visits, which decreased between 2015 and 2016, as well as pages viewed per session and duration of visit, which improved over the same period. The draft knowledge management strategy outlined initiatives to produce, manage and ensure the effective distribution of knowledge products and raise public awareness of those products, and identified the main risks and challenges

involved, among other things. The draft strategy however, was yet to be approved and implemented and did not include a budget or a timeline for implementation.

Recommendation 5 addressed the need to strengthen performance monitoring and results assessment. ECLAC implemented the recommendation by capitalizing on United Nations institutionalized programme monitoring mechanisms such as the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). ECLAC strengthened the process by supplementing IMDIS advisory notes with monitoring and reporting guidelines specific to the Commission (under revision) and "hands-on" guidance notes issued by the Programme Planning and Operations Division to the substantive divisions. In addition, ECLAC created tools for surveying work related to technical assistance and publications. An OIOS audit, conducted by the Internal Audit Division, of selected subprogrammes and their related technical cooperation projects at ECLAC concluded that ECLAC had instituted effective mechanisms to manage subprogrammes. Staff interviewed were, in general, satisfied with the quality of monitoring and reporting, including the reporting in IMDIS.

Recommendation 6 addressed the need to strengthen the ECLAC evaluation function by, inter alia, establishing a separate evaluation unit. The reinforced ECLAC evaluation team continued to be located in the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit supervised by the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis. Requests for additional budget funding to set up an independent unit were denied by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts. To enhance the independence of the evaluation function, ECLAC introduced firewalls, such as separate representation of the evaluation team at meetings. In addition, ECLAC revised its evaluation policy and strategy and published evaluation guidelines in 2017. Follow-up to the implementation of evaluation recommendations was institutionalized and lessons learned and recommendations covering the period 2011–2014 were made available to all ECLAC staff in early 2016. The number of evaluations conducted increased, however, no subprogramme evaluations were conducted during the period 2015–2017.

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session in 2015, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, on the programme evaluation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (E/AC.51/2015/6).

2. The Committee expressed appreciation for the report and the positive overall assessment of the work of ECLAC, including its support in the development of policies, the promotion of regional integration and the harmonization of statistics, and that OIOS had recognized some of the key strengths of and challenges faced by ECLAC. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraph 74 of the report.

3. The present report is issued pursuant to a triennial review of the recommendations and examines the status of implementation of the six recommendations contained in the evaluation. The review also addressed, where possible, the extent to which implementation of the recommendations contributed to programme changes.

4. The methodology for the triennial review included:

(a) Review and analysis of the biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations, which are monitored through the OIOS recommendation's database;

(b) Analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from ECLAC on various topics related to the recommendations;

(c) Remote interviews conducted with a purposive sample of ECLAC staff.

5. The report incorporates comments received from ECLAC during the drafting process. A final draft was shared with ECLAC for its formal comments, which are contained in the annex. OIOS expresses its appreciation to ECLAC for the cooperation it extended in the preparation of the report.

II. Results

6. The Economic Commission for Latin America was established in 1948 as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. By resolution 1984/67, it was renamed the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. It serves 46 member States and 13 associate members. The ECLAC mandate is to promote economic, social and environmentally sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean through international cooperation, to which end it: (a) serves as a regional forum and facilitator for consensus-building; (b) provides analysis, research and evidence-based policy alternatives; and (c) provides advisory services (technical assistance) to facilitate the formulation, adoption and implementation of development policies. At the time of the evaluation, the ECLAC programme of work was delivered through 14 subprogrammes grouped into five thematic clusters.

7. In its evaluation, OIOS noted that ECLAC had facilitated regional and subregional decision-making in some critical areas and, through its research and analysis, had increased an overall understanding of the various issues affecting the region and supported the strengthening and harmonization of statistics in the region.

However, it concluded that the knowledge produced was not disseminated and that ECLAC was less effective in building capacity in the Caribbean region. In that regard, OIOS made six recommendations to ECLAC: to review the strategy in support of its mandates; to develop a country-by-country engagement strategy; to formalize mechanisms to incorporate the priorities of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee into divisional work programmes; to develop outreach strategies; to strengthen its performance monitoring mechanisms; and to strengthen its evaluation functions and practices.

8. In its review, OIOS determined that three of the six recommendations were implemented (recommendations 1, 3 and 5), while three (recommendations 2, 4 and 6) were partially implemented. There is some evidence of concrete positive outcomes resulting from the implemented recommendations. The implementation status of each of the six recommendations is described below.

Recommendation 1
Review of ECLAC strategies and structure

9. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

> ECLAC should, within its mandate, assess its strategies and structure in order to achieve greater convergence between its thematic areas of work and its three core functions and to ensure the effective use of its available resources.
>
> **Indicator of achievement**: Document reviewing the strategies and structure used in the preparation of the budget.

10. This recommendation was based on the evaluation result that the growing demand for ECLAC work had placed enormous pressure on the ECLAC organizational structure and available resources, creating unwieldy structures in some areas and stretching resources too thinly in general. ECLAC needed to review its strategies and structure to more effectively identify synergies in its programme structure and design its strategies to better respond to the thematic priorities, given the reality of resource constraints.

11. Staff interviewed indicated that the thematic areas of work and organizational structures were constantly assessed as part of the core business of the ECLAC secretariat. ECLAC implemented the recommendation by reviewing its strategies and structure during the preparation of the biennial strategic framework and programme of work. In 2015, an interdivisional working group began to meet to ensure the alignment of ECLAC activities with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, to realign and restructure its programme of work to better respond to the demands and needs of member States, and to strengthen the support that the Commission provides at the request of the countries in the region, a proposal was put forward in the strategic framework for 2018–2019 to merge subprogramme 4, Financing for development, with subprogramme 3, Macroeconomic policies and growth. This proposal was endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The proposed strategic framework for the period 2018–2019 (A/71/6 (Prog.18), para. 18.6) indicated the following:

> "The integration of subprogramme 4, Financing for development, which is focused on the mobilization of resources, with subprogramme 3, Macroeconomic policies and growth, is hereby proposed in response to the increasing demands from member States for analysis and policy proposals to tackle the new challenges for macroeconomic policymaking within the

framework and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. A key element of both agendas is a focus on domestic resource mobilization and its complementarities with external resource mobilization. The integration of the two subprogrammes will increase the capacity to design new macroeconomic policies — fiscal, monetary and financial — geared towards mobilizing domestic and external resources in line with the goals and targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda, in particular Goal 8, "Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", and Goal 17, "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development". With regard to fiscal policy, this will permit strengthening the analysis of the links between domestic fiscal efforts and fiscal coordination and cooperation at the global level, which play a central role in assessing the capacity of countries to increase their ability to mobilize domestic financing for development. It will also facilitate the introduction of new areas of work that arise from the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, namely, illicit financial flows, tax coordination and transfer pricing, among others. Synergies resulting from the integration of the two subprogrammes will allow ECLAC to better respond to demands from member countries in these new areas, as part of the fit-for-purpose efforts carried out by the Commission".

13. Assessing the impact of this merger in terms of ensuring the effective use of available resources will only be possible once the changes have been fully implemented. Combining the two subprogrammes already led to the merging of two analytical outputs into a single comprehensive report for the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

14. This recommendation was implemented. However, results will not be achieved until after the implementation of the proposed new structure in the biennium 2018–2019. OIOS emphasizes that reviewing organizational priorities and structures to optimize support for member States is an ongoing responsibility of ECLAC senior management.

Recommendation 2
Develop a country-by-country engagement strategy

14. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

ECLAC should develop and implement an engagement strategy vis-à-vis national policymakers in technical ministries throughout the region. Such a strategy should include: (a) regular dissemination of information about the work of ECLAC; and (b) annual consultations with Governments (both central agencies and technical ministries), jointly undertaken by headquarters divisions and subregional headquarters, to brief them on relevant planned, ongoing and completed work and to discuss the country's needs and priorities.

Indicator of achievement: Approved and implemented engagement strategy.

15. This recommendation was based on mixed experiences at ECLAC in maintaining regular communications and effective liaison relationships with officials in relevant technical ministries throughout the region, and the resultant low awareness of and access to ECLAC outputs among stakeholders.

16. The recommendation was accepted by ECLAC with some qualifications: "Being a regional commission, as compared with specialized agencies, funds and programmes, ECLAC has a programme of work with a regional scope, both in

geographical terms and in thematic areas of interest for member States. In this context, ECLAC maintains continuous dialogue with government authorities and other stakeholders on the region's development agenda, their needs and priorities with regard to the work of its subsidiary bodies, and the provision of technical cooperation services at the national level. ECLAC regularly disseminates its work and discusses with member States' authorities their changing priorities and needs. Nevertheless, national strategies should be driven primarily by the demands of member States, with full respect for their own agendas and timetable, so as to avoid any misconception of the ECLAC secretariat's being prescriptive, and respecting countries' particular needs and political circumstances" (see E/AC.51/2015/6, annex).

17. ECLAC drafted a knowledge management strategy with the aim of addressing ECLAC initiatives from within and engaging with counterparts in member countries, as well as the general public, in the management and dissemination of knowledge. The strategy was yet to be approved by the Executive Secretary. Staff interviewed indicated that the strategy fulfilled the purpose of strengthening the organization's outreach, including to national policymakers.

18. In addition, ECLAC ensured the regular dissemination of publications and information about its work. At the end of 2014, ECLAC redesigned its website (www.cepal.org), in terms of both architecture and content, and launched a digital repository (http://repositorio.cepal.org). The Publications and Web Services Division, with the help of a customer relationship management system, regularly analysed ECLAC data. The analysis indicated that Governments were among the largest user groups of ECLAC information services, accounting for over 25 per cent.

19. Staff interviewed indicated that regular interactions and consultations with member States took place within ECLAC subsidiary bodies and during the course of intergovernmental events and missions. For example, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was used as a new platform for ECLAC to engage with member State representatives. The Forum was State-led and open to the participation of Latin American and Caribbean countries, convened under the auspices of ECLAC. It involved member States represented by ECLAC, the private sector and civil society, as well as representatives of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC, development banks, United Nations agencies and regional integration blocs. ECLAC used the Forum to identify the specific demands and needs of countries in relation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, which helped it to reshape the programme of work of the Commission to respond to those needs. The Forum also facilitated the exchange of experiences between countries through the presentations of voluntary national reviews, allowing ECLAC to showcase the technical cooperation undertaken in various countries. The first meeting of the Forum took place in Mexico City on 26–28 April 2017.

20. ECLAC did not, however, institute annual consultations with individual member States as required by the recommendation. Staff interviewed reiterated that engagement with ECLAC member States was complex and multi-layered, and that, given its mandate as a regional commission and the demand-driven nature of its work, it would not be deemed appropriate for ECLAC to organize annual bilateral discussions with national ministries.

21. This recommendation was partially implemented, in anticipation of the imminent approval and implementation of the knowledge management strategy and the holding by ECLAC of annual consultations with individual member States.

Recommendation 3
Formalize mechanisms to incorporate priorities of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee into divisional work programmes

22. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

> ECLAC should put in place a formal mechanism to ensure that the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee are incorporated into the work programmes of all the relevant headquarters substantive divisions.
>
> **Indicator of achievement**: Guidance note to divisions formulated.

23. This recommendation was based on the evaluation result that ECLAC did not prioritize the Caribbean, despite the increased targeted efforts of senior management. The evaluation identified the need for further mainstreaming of Caribbean priorities into the ECLAC programme of work, including its research and analysis work, in order to increase the organization's relevance to countries in the Caribbean subregion. The need for ECLAC to define the roles and responsibilities of headquarters divisions (both substantive divisions and programme support) to support the implementation of the decisions of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) was identified.

24. CDCC is a permanent subsidiary body of ECLAC, established in 1975 to promote and strengthen economic and social cooperation and integration among the countries of the Caribbean, and to promote cooperation between them and the countries and the integration processes of Latin America and the Caribbean. Staff interviewed indicated that the incorporation and implementation of CDCC decisions into the work of the substantive divisions at ECLAC headquarters had improved. At the thirty-sixth session of the Commission in 2016, while presenting the report on the activities carried out by CDCC, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Aviation of Saint Kitts and Nevis expressed appreciation for the support provided by ECLAC to the members of CDCC and its efforts to include the Caribbean in flagship publications.[1]

25. The report on the activities of CDCC from January 2014 to December 2015 provided a wealth of information about the main results achieved and the activities carried out under subprogramme 13, Subregional activities in the Caribbean, including in connection with CDCC. For instance, it reported that ECLAC had developed the Caribbean Development Portal (http://caribbean.eclac.org) to enhance the diffusion of knowledge about the current state of economic and social development in the Caribbean.

26. Moreover, an internal memorandum was issued in November 2017 to provide guidance on incorporating the decisions of CDCC into the ECLAC programme of work. In the note, the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis indicated that ECLAC had made great efforts to increasingly incorporate the Caribbean subregion into the research and analysis carried out by the substantive divisions and the subregional headquarters in Mexico, as well as into the data published in ECLAC flagship publications.

27. In preparation for the strategic framework and the programme of work for the biennium 2020–2021, the guidance note reminded the Directors of the Economic Development Division and the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean to ensure that decisions and resolutions taken by CDCC at its twenty-sixth session in 2016 were incorporated into their current and future programmes of work, as applicable. The

[1] Report of the thirty-sixth session, Mexico City, 23–27 May 2016.

guidance note pinpointed: (a) CDCC endorsement of the debt swap proposal; (b) two requests for the ECLAC secretariat to continue to provide assistance to member States with respect to mainstreaming disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction initiatives in their development plans; and (c) the need to provide institutional support to facilitate synergies in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway at the national and regional levels.

28. A response to the guidance note from the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean outlined how the CDCC decisions in question were being addressed. For instance, ECLAC had established the Caribbean debt for climate adaptation swap initiative and set up an inter-agency task force for its implementation. The initiative appeared to have garnered a lot of momentum and a high-level event in support of the Caribbean countries ravaged by hurricanes in 2017 was successfully organized.

29. As formal guidance was issued only in 2017, the review was unable to assess its impact on the integration of support for Caribbean priorities, including in the work of the divisions at ECLAC headquarters. A further guidance note is due following the twenty-seventh session of CDCC in 2018.

30. The recommendation was implemented.

Recommendation 4
Develop an outreach strategy

31. Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

> ECLAC should improve the effectiveness of its knowledge dissemination by developing an outreach strategy that guides the issuance of every knowledge product (publication) that it delivers. Such a strategy should include an action plan, a budget and measures for the monitoring of the output's utility.
>
> **Indicator of achievement**: Approved outreach strategy.

32. This recommendation required ECLAC to develop an outreach strategy based on the evaluation result that the dissemination and promotion of ECLAC publications were not considered a priority and ECLAC had not fully ensured that knowledge reached national policymakers and other audiences.

33. The recommendation was accepted by ECLAC with a slight adaptation: "ECLAC will develop an outreach strategy at an aggregate level rather than at the individual output level, which could prove to be unattainable in practical terms. The strategy at the aggregate department level could be flexibly tailored to the specificities of each knowledge output" (see E/AC.51/2015/6, annex).

34. ECLAC implemented several activities to enhance information dissemination. At the end of 2014, ECLAC redesigned its website (www.cepal.org), in terms of both architecture and content. A central digital repository (http://repositorio.cepal.org) was launched, which in December 2017 provided access to more than 35,000 digital publications, including the first ECLAC publication dated 1948. To monitor access to publications and other information outputs, the Publications and Web Services Division tracked visits to the website using appropriate analytical tools. The 2016 analysis indicated that the ECLAC website generated over 3.2 million users and 9.3 million page views. A comparison with 2015 indicated a decrease in visits in terms of the number of users (by 15.4 per cent) and page visits (by 13.35 per cent), but an

improvement in quality in terms of pages viewed per session (by 2.61 per cent) and duration of visit (by 11.43 per cent).[2]

35. ECLAC also used a variety of social media platforms to reach member States and other target audiences. In 2016, Facebook attracted the most traffic (120,687 sessions), followed by Twitter (31,851 sessions),[3] which reflected the same trend as in 2015. ECLAC also disseminated email updates. During 2016, approximately 21,500 contacts were added to the electronic subscriptions system, which already had a total of over 54,000 contacts.[4]

36. ECLAC amended the format of its reporting on the press coverage, downloads and utilization of five of its six annual flagship publications. Starting in 2015, it produced short infographic reports in Spanish ("Informe de análisis de publicación") on each publication. Statistics showed that two months after the launch of the *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2016*, electronic downloads totalled 15,667 in three languages.[5] Most users of the publication belonged to universities, research centres and public organizations.

37. A knowledge management strategy (mentioned in recommendation 2) had been drafted and awaited approval by the Executive Secretary. The strategy listed initiatives to, among other objectives, produce, manage and ensure the effective distribution of knowledge products, strengthen capacities, facilitate the exchange of experience and raise public awareness, and identified the main risks and challenges involved. The draft strategy, however, did not envisage a budget or a timeline for implementation. The responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the strategy was delegated to the Publications and Web Services Division.

38. This recommendation was partially implemented, in anticipation of the imminent approval of the draft knowledge management strategy. ECLAC needs to ensure that the strategy also includes a budget and timeline for implementation.

Recommendation 5
Strengthen performance monitoring mechanisms

39. Recommendation 5 reads as follows:

> ECLAC should strengthen its performance monitoring mechanisms and ensure the consistency of data collection methods and tools used by divisions to support result assessments. Collected performance data, as well as identified lessons learned, should be discussed at the strategic planning and monitoring meetings.
>
> **Indicator of achievement**: Updated and approved guidelines for monitoring and evaluation.

40. This recommendation was based on the evaluation result that practices for measuring, collecting, recording and using performance data, especially at the outcome level, were inconsistent among ECLAC substantive divisions.

41. ECLAC used the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS) for programme monitoring by the substantive divisions. The uploading to IMDIS of evidence on results achieved by the substantive divisions was

[2] "Reporte de métricas sitio web CEPAL: análisis anual 2016".
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] "Informe de análisis de publicación: *Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe 2016*".

institutionalized in 2014–2015. IMDIS reporting was guided by advisory notes issued by the Department of Management. To strengthen this process, the ECLAC Programme Planning and Operations Division supplemented the IMDIS advisory notes with monitoring and reporting guidelines specific to the Commission and "hands-on" guidance notes, such as a guidance note on 24-month review. The ECLAC monitoring and reporting guidelines were under revision and a new draft was expected to be issued imminently. In addition, project monitoring for the Development Account projects was governed by its specific Development Account methodology. Staff interviewed were satisfied with the quality of ECLAC monitoring and reporting, which were guided by the United Nations Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6).

42. The updated ECLAC evaluation policy and strategy and the evaluation guidelines, both published in 2017, provided additional guidance to staff on periodically reviewing programme implementation and assessing whether a programme is on track to achieve the results expected at the end of the biennium. In its review of both documents, however, OIOS indicated that neither document determined key elements of an institutional monitoring system, such as what is monitored, when, how, by whom and for whom.

43. An audit of selected subprogrammes and their related technical cooperation projects at ECLAC, conducted by the Internal Audit Division of OIOS in 2016, concluded that ECLAC had instituted effective mechanisms to manage subprogrammes (based on a sample of four subprogrammes audited). In the audit report, it was noted that the following institutional mechanisms provided strategic direction and overall supervision to deliver performance results: (a) annual programme implementation plans approved by the ECLAC senior management team and monitored every six months; (b) central coordination and guidance by the Programme Planning and Operations Division to develop and report on work programmes and reduce the risk of overlap or duplication of activities; and (c) biannual strategic meetings, annual directors' retreats and monthly monitoring meetings, weekly senior management team meetings, designated working groups and biannual town hall meetings. However, the audit also reported that IMDIS records had not been completely updated owing to the turnover in the monitoring focal point position in July 2015; and partial non-compliance was also because of insufficient training on the IMDIS reporting functions owing to unavailability of resources.

44. In addition, ECLAC revamped and strengthened its monitoring and evaluation network by implementing periodic meetings, support sessions and training for division monitoring and evaluation focal points, and day-to-day contact with the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit became more fluid. The Programme Planning and Operations Division also created model surveys in Spanish and English for outcome-level data collection by the substantive divisions and provided guidance on request. These included: a publications survey; a technical assistance exit survey; a technical assistance follow-up survey; a workshop exit survey; and a workshop follow-up survey. Survey results were collated and reported in IMDIS.

45. While ECLAC had undertaken efforts to strengthen its performance monitoring and accountability, staff interviewed suggested that, following the introduction of Umoja (United Nations enterprise resource planning system) in 2015, the discontinuation of some monitoring tools such as the mission reporting system that built on IMDIS, had been initially somewhat disruptive.

46. This recommendation was implemented.

Recommendation 6
Strengthen the evaluation function and practices

47. Recommendation 6 reads as follows:

> ECLAC should strengthen its evaluation function by establishing a separate evaluation unit with the necessary competencies and resources; identifying and undertaking periodic, risk-based evaluations across the subprogrammes; and following up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations to promote accountability.
>
> **Indicator of achievement**: Revised and approved terms of reference of the evaluation unit.

48. This recommendation was based on the evaluation result that the coverage and impact of ECLAC evaluation work remained insufficient owing to the lack of a clear mechanism to determine evaluation priorities; insufficient follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations; and questions around evaluation capacities, the level of dedicated resources and reporting lines.

49. The ECLAC evaluation function had not changed in terms of structure since the evaluation of ECLAC and was still situated within the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Programme Planning and Operations Division. When preparing its programme budget for 2018–2019 in November 2016, ECLAC requested permission from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts to use savings from Umoja to finance the separation of the evaluation function. The request was declined on the basis that the use of Umoja efficiency gains cannot be authorized for the establishment of a new unit, as the OIOS recommendation did not constitute a new mandate by the General Assembly, which could have supported an increase in proposed resources for ECLAC for the biennium 2018–2019.

50. The evaluation function operated under the supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Management and Programme Analysis, who headed the Programme Planning and Operations Division and reported directly to the Executive Secretary. At the end of 2017, the evaluation team consisted of one full-time staff member at the P4 level and one staff member at the G4 level who functioned as an evaluation assistant, together with the partial use of the services of an administrative assistant in the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit. While the evaluation function remained within the Division, ECLAC strengthened it by separating it from other management functions and its independence was ensured to the extent possible. Certain firewalls were set up, for instance, through separate representation of the evaluation team at meetings (rather than being represented by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit). Staff interviewed considered this set-up a satisfactory compromise under the circumstances, furthermore, in general, ECLAC faced limited resources and the abolishment of posts, and it was therefore financially impossible to include a separate evaluation unit in any future budget proposals.

51. To further strengthen its evaluation function, a revised ECLAC evaluation policy and strategy was published in October 2017. The document described the background and context of the evaluation function within the United Nations system; outlined the objectives, guiding concepts and principles of evaluation at ECLAC; described the institutional framework of the evaluation function and the evaluation process; detailed the use of evaluation and follow-up mechanisms; and presented the ECLAC strategy for coordinating and sharing knowledge with other institutions within and outside the United Nations system. The evaluation policy and strategy also

addressed the specific responsibilities of the evaluation function with respect to the planning and governance of terms of evaluation, the management of evaluations, and the communication and dissemination of evaluation results.

52. The evaluation policy and strategy indicated that ECLAC aimed to allocate 2 to 5 per cent of the total budget of each programme and project to evaluation and established that, in order to attain that benchmark, all Development Account projects needed to allocate between 2 and 3 per cent of their respective total budgets to conduct an external evaluation of the project. Furthermore, and whenever feasible, all extrabudgetary projects and programmes over $200,000 were required to earmark appropriate resources for monitoring and evaluation functions. In addition, and subject to the availability of resources, the Programme Planning and Operations Division was committed to conduct at least one thematic or strategic evaluation per biennium. As the policy was finalized in October 2017, the review could not determine whether such earmarking was implemented systematically.

53. In 2017, ECLAC also published a document containing its revised guidelines on preparing and conducting evaluations, with the aim of standardizing the approach taken, clarifying roles and responsibilities and ultimately contributing to greater transparency and coherence, accountability, improved performance and institutional learning.

54. ECLAC evaluation reports were publicly available through the digital repository and the ECLAC home page.[6] The number of evaluations increased in the five years preceding the OIOS evaluation, during which time ECLAC carried out 11 evaluations, whereas it published 13 and finalized two evaluations in the three-year period 2015–2017 (see table). Except for one (the review of the German bilateral cooperation with ECLAC), 14 of those 15 evaluations were on Development Account projects. No subprogramme evaluations were conducted during the period.

ECLAC final assessment reports, 2015–2017

Year	*Evaluation report*
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 10/11 G — Improving the management of resources for the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, August 2015
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 08/09 AE — Understanding potential economic impacts of climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean, August 2015
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 10/11 AP — Strengthening the national capacities of export sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean to meet the challenges of climate change, September 2015
2015	Final evaluation report: evaluation of Development Account project 10/11 H — Strengthening statistical and inter-institutional capacities for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals through interregional cooperation and knowledge-sharing, October 2015

[6] https://www.cepal.org/en/accountability-and-evaluation.

Year	*Evaluation report*
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 08/09 C — Enhancing capacities to eradicate violence against women through networking of local knowledge communities, October 2015
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 06/07 AM — Strengthening national capacities to design and implement sustainable energy policies for the production and use of biofuels in Latin America and the Caribbean, November 2015
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 10/11 AQ — Strengthening government and civil society capacity to incorporate economic and social rights into macroeconomic policy, December 2015
2015	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 08/09 Y — Strengthening the capacity of local governments in Latin America to address critical issues arising from internationally agreed development goals, December 2015
2016	Final evaluation report: review of the German Bilateral Technical Cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), January 2016
2016	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 08/09 Z — Strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices in the Caribbean small island developing States to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals, February 2016
2016	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 12/13 AX — Social inclusion of youth within a context of increasing violence and insecurity through innovative programmes and evidence-based policies, May 2016
2016	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 12/13 AD — Towards a low carbon economy in Latin America: policy options for energy efficiency and innovation, May 2016
2016	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project 12/13 AC — Towards productivity convergence: trade, financing and technology for small-scale enterprises, September 2016
2017	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project ROA 235-8 — Time for equality: strengthening the institutional framework of social policies
2017	Final assessment report: assessment of Development Account project ROA 236-8 — Strengthening the capacities of Latin America and Asia to develop and improve labour training systems and to protect workers against unemployment

55. To promote accountability, in 2013, ECLAC institutionalized follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The follow-up process was also

detailed in the evaluation policy and strategy and the evaluation guidelines published in 2017. To ensure systematic follow-up, consolidated matrices were prepared. At the end of each year, all divisions involved in the evaluation processes were required to update the status of implementation of each of the agreed actions covering a two-year period.

56. To further strengthen the evaluation process, the ECLAC evaluation team disseminated lessons learned and recommendations emanating from ECLAC evaluations. A brochure providing an overview of lessons learned and recommendations covering the period 2011–2014 was prepared in 2015 and made available to all ECLAC staff in early 2016; ECLAC was in the process of completing a similar document for the period 2015–2016.

57. Although ECLAC established an evaluation policy and strategy and evaluation guidelines, and institutionalized follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations, it was unable to establish a separate evaluation unit. Furthermore, ECLAC did not evaluate any of its subprogrammes between 2015 and 2017.

58. This recommendation was partially implemented.

III. Conclusion

59. ECLAC took important steps to implement the six recommendations in the evaluation, which led to a number of positive outcomes.

60. Continuous assessment and deliberations regarding the positioning and relevance of the organization resulted in the merger of two subprogrammes in 2018 with the objective of achieving greater convergence. Mechanisms to incorporate specific priorities of the Caribbean subregion, as determined by CDCC, into the various work programmes were institutionalized. Concrete actions taken to strengthen online access to publications and information improved the effectiveness of ECLAC knowledge dissemination to different stakeholder groups, including national policymakers. A knowledge management strategy was drafted and was awaiting approval by the Executive Secretary. Monitoring and evaluation of ECLAC work were strengthened through institutional guidance and capacity-building.

61. However, as a result of an unsuccessful request and limited resources, a separate independent evaluation unit could not be established, and evaluations of ECLAC subprogrammes were not conducted. ECLAC needs to identify alternative ways of further strengthening its evaluation unit, allowing it to be independent and to evaluate its subprogrammes systematically.

(*Signed*) Heidi **Mendoza**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2018

Annex*

Comments received from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) welcomes this comprehensive report, which recognizes all efforts made by the Commission in the implementation of the recommendations issued as a result of the programme evaluation of ECLAC (E/AC.51/2015/6).

We are pleased to inform that ECLAC has no additional comments on the report. In relation to the implementation of those recommendations that are still in progress, ECLAC would like to mention that both the ECLAC knowledge management strategy and the ECLAC outreach strategy are in the final stages of revision for approval by the ECLAC Information and Communications Committee and by the Deputy Executive Secretary, respectively. Furthermore, ECLAC appreciates the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) taking note of all the efforts made by the Commission to strengthen the evaluation process.

Finally, ECLAC would like to take this opportunity to thank OIOS for the collaborative approach in this triennial review.

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services presents below the full text of the comments received from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

United Nations E/AC.51/2018/8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 March 2018

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-eighth session
Organizational session, 19 April 2018
Substantive session, 4–29 June 2018*
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda**
Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the International Trade Centre

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division, is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session (A/37/38 (Supp), para. 362) to establish triennial reviews of the implementation of decisions taken by the Committee on the basis of in-depth evaluation studies. The triennial review determined the extent to which the five recommendations emanating from the Division's programme evaluation of the International Trade Centre (ITC) have been implemented.

The evaluation recommendations of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS addressed various aspects of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in the execution by ITC of its mandate. At the conclusion of its fifty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly endorse the Division's evaluation report. ITC has taken significant steps to implement all the recommendations contained in the Division's evaluation of 2015. The triennial review determined that four recommendations (recommendations 1–3 and 5) have been implemented, while one recommendation was partially implemented (recommendation 4).

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
** E/AC.51/2018/1.

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There is evidence of some early positive changes to the ITC programme as a result of the implementation of the recommendations. As compared with 2015, ITC was more focused on core corporate priorities, which were, overall, better aligned with client and donor priorities, resulting in specific ITC projects also better aligned with corporate priorities. Its core corporate priorities have been institutionalized through the use of results-based management tools such as logical frameworks and theories of change. The reporting and evidence generation on results, including higher-level results, has improved. ITC had, through its programmes, advanced the promotion of women, youth and the environment in trade. Early indications of positive outcomes were noted, although the real impact of the implementation of the five recommendations on the work of ITC could not yet be assessed and would require sustained attention from ITC.

Recommendation 1 focused on monitoring and reporting on the implementation of ITC action plans formulated in response to the 2014 independent evaluation of ITC, as well as the 2015 OIOS evaluation. ITC had since monitored and reported regularly to the Joint Advisory Group and the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund on the implementation status of actions taken on both evaluations. As a result of reporting on the action plans, action to address the implementation of the recommendations from both evaluations was taken in a timely manner.

Recommendation 2 addressed the need for ITC to adopt a more holistic, data-driven approach to strategic planning and budgeting. Since 2015, ITC had made various efforts to sharpen the strategic focus of ITC to better match its corporate priorities with global needs and with client and donor priorities. The strategic plan identified six focus areas and a number of key initiatives. A corporate results framework established development outcomes, indicators and targets that ITC intended to achieve through its portfolio of projects and programmes. The resource mobilization strategy demonstrated the intention to move from a donor-driven model to one that is more driven by ITC corporate priorities.

Recommendation 3 addressed the need to operationalize the ITC strategic plan by ensuring that the programme and project approval protocol aligns ITC projects with corporate priorities and that an objective needs assessment is carried out, while paying adequate attention to monitoring, evaluation and risk management. ITC has implemented the new project portal (NPP), and an online project management tool and, since 1 January 2016, the entire ITC portfolio of projects has been managed through the new system. This included: (a) project alignment with corporate priorities, as all new programmes and projects have to be in line with the corporate results framework; (b) needs assessments; (c) risk management plans to identify and assess risks and provide information on how risks will be managed; and (d) monitoring and evaluation plans.

Recommendation 4 addressed the need for ITC to enhance its capacity to generate more evidence on the results achieved by its interventions and on the cost-effectiveness of these interventions. The ITC Independent Evaluation Unit developed comprehensive evaluation guidelines (July 2017) and prepared an online training programme for project managers. Nevertheless, actual capacity development appeared to be limited at the time of the review (December 2017). While significant steps were taken to strengthen impact assessment, this remained a work in progress and required continued attention. With regard to the costing methodology, ITC had not finalized this, and the independence of the Unit remained suboptimal.

Recommendation 5 addressed the need for ITC to integrate the cross-cutting issues of gender, youth and the environment into its projects. Each of the 15 ITC programmes in existence explicitly considered these cross-cutting issues. Moreover, the new project portal required each project to show how it contributed to the cross-cutting issues. Most importantly, gender, youth and the environment were elevated to become corporate priorities, resulting in increased focus and positive outcomes in these three areas in ITC projects. ITC had also commenced integrating cross-cutting issues into capacity development, although this could be further strengthened.

Three important changes remained to be fully effected: (a) The shift from earmarked to unearmarked resources, despite the adoption of a more strategic approach to resource mobilization; (b) enhancement of the impact assessment of ITC work; and (c) enhancement of the structural independence of the evaluation function by abolishing the dual reporting line. The Independent Evaluation Unit should exclusively report to the Executive/Deputy Executive Director on all matters.

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session in 2015, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), prepared by the Inspection and Evaluation Division on the programme evaluation of the International Trade Centre (ITC) (E/AC.51/2015/8).

2. The Committee underscored the important work carried out by ITC, in particular its effectiveness, its proactivity and its specific efforts in supporting least developed and landlocked countries. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 55 to 60 of the report of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS on the evaluation of ITC. The Committee noted that the report contained useful recommendations for improving the performance of ITC and that most validated the outcomes of the independent evaluation of ITC completed in June 2014 (A/70/16, paras. 202, 206 and 207).

3. The present report is issued pursuant to a triennial review of the recommendations, and examines the status of implementation of the five recommendations contained in the OIOS report. The review also discusses whether, and if so, to what extent, implementation of the recommendations has contributed to programme changes.

4. The methodology of the triennial review included:

(a) Review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of recommendations, which are monitored through the OIOS recommendations database;

(b) Analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from ITC on various topics related to the recommendations;

(c) Interviews conducted in person or over the telephone with a purposive sample of ITC key staff.

5. The report incorporates comments received from ITC during the drafting process. A final draft was shared with ITC, on which comments were provided, which are attached in annex I. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation extended by ITC in the preparation of the present report.

II. Results

6. The mandated role of ITC is to support developing countries, post-conflict States and transitional economies and to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for technical cooperation with developing countries and economies in transition in promoting trade and export development. Through its programmes, ITC encourages entrepreneurship and empowers micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to integrate into regional and global value chains. The main intergovernmental policy forum of ITC is the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, to which it reports for substantive programme review and policy guidance.

7. The ITC evaluation contained five recommendations to ITC, namely, that it (a) monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations from its evaluation reports; (b) prioritize ITC corporate work; (c) revise the project approval protocol; (d) improve ITC capacity in the generation of evidence of results and the cost-effectiveness of its work; and (e) institutionalize the cross-cutting issues of gender, youth and the environment into projects. The review determined that four

recommendations (recommendations 1–3 and 5) have been implemented, while one recommendation (recommendation 4) has been partially implemented. There is some evidence of concrete positive outcomes resulting from the implemented recommendations. The implementation status of each of the five recommendations is discussed below.

Recommendation 1
Monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations from evaluation reports

8. Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

> The Office of the Executive Director of ITC should directly and regularly monitor operational units' implementation of the action plans formulated in response to the 2014 evaluation of ITC and the present evaluation, and report regularly on the implementation status of both action plans to its parent organizations and donors through the Joint Advisory Group.
>
> Indicator of achievement: Implementation of action plans regularly monitored, and implementation status regularly reported to the Joint Advisory Group, directly by the Office of the Executive Director

9. The recommendation required follow-up to the two evaluations of ITC conducted in 2014 and 2015. The 2014 evaluation was commissioned by ITC donors as an independent evaluation of ITC, covering the period 2006–2013, and was conducted by an external consultancy in 2014.[1] The ITC management response was endorsed by the Joint Advisory Group in January 2015. The 2015 evaluation was required for consideration by the Committee, conducted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS and completed in March 2015. Both evaluations gave rise to action plans to implement the recommendations contained therein.

10. In order to monitor and report on the implementation of the action plans, ITC compiled the actions emanating from both evaluations into a single set of actions, while still clearly indicating the original source of the action: either the donor-commissioned evaluation or the evaluation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIS. The implementation of the combined set of actions has been monitored and reported annually since 2015 in a report on the implementation of the ITC management response actions.

11. The report on the implementation of the ITC management response actions — which is available on the ITC public website[2] — provided a systematic account of the implementation status of the actions. The report captured the actions, the means of verification of the implementation status, the relevant actors within ITC, the completion date of the implementation, the current status and comments elaborating on actions taken.

12. The report was first presented to the members of the Joint Advisory Group in June 2015, with 48 actions to be taken by ITC management, and an annual update on the actions taken. The report was updated for the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund in November 2015, for the Joint Advisory Group meeting in 2016 and for a fourth time in June 2017 to inform Consultative Committee and Joint Advisory Group members about the implementation status of the 48 actions. In that most recent update, the report indicated 94 per cent of the actions implemented and three actions

[1] Independent evaluation of the International Trade Centre (ITC): final report (Saana Consulting, May 2014). Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/evaluation/.
[2] www.intracen.org/itc/events/JAG/.

as work in progress.[3] The periodic reporting to the Joint Advisory Group demonstrated the timely implementation of these actions, which contributed to positive changes in the organization.

13. The recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 2
Prioritize ITC corporate work

14. Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

> To enhance efforts to strengthen its results orientation, ITC should incrementally adopt a more holistic, data-driven approach to planning and budgeting while still seeking alignment with donor and client priorities. Anchored in the 2016–2017 strategic framework and 2015–2017 strategic plan, this approach should include:
>
> (a) A needs assessment methodology to ensure that ITC prioritizes its corporate work, programmes and projects across regions, countries and industries where its expertise is most needed and where it can make the most difference in relation to other actors;
>
> (b) A medium-term strategy for gradually moving the organization toward this more holistic, needs-based and data-driven approach, to complement the demand-driven model.
>
> Indicator of achievement: Documents drafted and their meaningful implementation monitored

15. The evaluation report of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS indicated that the products and services of ITC were tailored to the priorities of donors and assisted Governments and some beneficiaries, but were not prioritized using a strategic, risk-based approach. The lack of a more strategic approach was attributed, at least in part, to the heavy reliance of ITC on (notably, earmarked) extrabudgetary resources. While the ITC donor- and beneficiary-driven approach was possibly fulfilling certain needs, this approach did not necessarily ensure that ITC was consistently supplying products and services where needs were greatest, or that its interventions were targeted to the countries, sectors and small and medium-sized enterprises where it could achieve the greatest impact on reducing poverty. ITC did not indicate precisely which countries would be prioritized on the basis of a specific needs assessment,[4] nor did it systematically analyse gaps in the aid-for-trade arena where it could complement other initiatives. The "thought leader" survey indicated that there was limited understanding of the comparative advantage of ITC relative to other actors.[5] The recommendation addressed the need for ITC to develop a holistic approach to prioritizing its corporate work.

16. ITC management accepted the recommendation with an important caveat: the recommendation was seen as a challenge for ITC because, as a small agency, it found it difficult to invest in thorough, in-depth and universal needs analyses. While the recommendation was accepted, ITC stressed that it would do so carefully to make sure that it was complementary to the valuable role ITC plays as a trusted broker between demand for its services and the funding that is available for them.[6]

[3] The 2014 independent evaluation of ITC and the 2015 OIOS Programme Evaluation of the ITC: Report on the implementation of the ITC management response actions — update on the implementation status, 30 June 2017, p. 1.

[4] E/AC.51/2015/8, paras. 31–36.

[5] Ibid., paras. 38–40.

[6] Ibid., annex, para. 5.

Subsequently, the Committee encouraged ITC to target the regions, countries and industries most in need of its expertise.[7]

17. Since 2015, ITC has taken several steps to sharpen its strategic focus in order to better align corporate priorities with client and donor priorities. ITC had a strategic plan 2015–2017, which was subsequently updated by a new strategic plan 2018–2021. In these strategic plans, ITC established six focus areas (also referred to as thematic priorities):[8]

(a) Globally accessible trade and market intelligence;

(b) Building a conducive business environment;

(c) Strengthening trade and investment support institutions;

(d) Sector and enterprise development;

(e) Inclusive and green trade;

(f) Supporting regional economic integration and South-South trade and investment.

18. Each focus area was broken down into a limited number of "key initiatives", adding another level of prioritization.

19. ITC also established a corporate results framework, which showed the development outcomes, indicators and targets that ITC intended to achieve with its portfolio of projects and programmes. The framework required specific projects and programmes to contribute to corporate results, and ITC country and regional interventions adapted ITC programmes to suit local needs. ITC project design methodology required a clear demonstration of the comparative advantage of ITC in the planned area of intervention and its alignment with corporate priorities. The methodology included a project design template that required answers to specific questions when completing the "competitive design" section in the template. Questions included: "Why ITC? What are other agencies doing in this area? What is the comparative advantage of ITC for implementing this project?" ITC comparative advantages were also assessed at the ITC programme level. In this regard, an assessment of other organizations was conducted in 2016 (e.g., the "Assess, Improve, Measure for results" programme). In developing both the 2015–17 and 2018–21 strategic plans, ITC conducted extensive consultation with its stakeholders. Consultations included surveys requesting stakeholders to suggest areas for ITC focus and to assess its strengths and weaknesses.

20. ITC completed and implemented a resource mobilization strategy in 2015.[9] Among several objectives, two demonstrated the intention to move from a client and donor-driven model to one more driven by the following corporate priorities:

(a) Make financing longer term, flexible and needs driven; refocusing funders from strictly earmarked to unearmarked financing aligned with ITC programmatic needs/prioritization;

(b) Ensure "one single agenda" for fundraising, particularly through Agency-wide prioritization, coordination and matchmaking of ITC interventions with those of funder preferences.

21. Although one of the overall objectives of the resource mobilization strategy is that financing should be more flexible, needs-driven and with more unearmarked

[7] A/70/16, para. 208.

[8] ITC strategic plan 2018–2021: trade routes to sustainable and inclusive development. Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/working-with-itc/corporate-documents/strategic-plan/.

[9] Boosting ITC resource mobilization for greater impact 2015–2017 (ITC, 2015).

aligning with ITC priorities, financial data for the years 2014–2016 did not reveal such a trend (see table 1). In fact, unearmarked and soft-earmarked contributions from donors (Window I) decreased, both as a percentage and in absolute terms, while bilateral contributions for specific projects and programmes (Window II) increased, again both as a percentage and in absolute terms. ITC staff interviewed indicated that the refugee crisis in Europe had a negative impact on their efforts to increase unearmarked (or soft-earmarked) resources, as donor priorities have shifted to humanitarian aid. Final figures of net income for 2017 were not available at the time of the review. However, staff also explained that, while preliminary figures indicated that, although Window I income did not increase in 2017, multi-year agreements signed in 2017 indicated growth in Window I funding for the coming years.[10]

Table
International Trade Centre, net income received 2014–2016

	2014		*2015*		*2016*	
Budget	*$M*	*%*	*$M*	*%*	*$M*	*%*
Regular budget	40.93	45	37.42	40	38.6	41
Programme support costs	5.18	6	5.59	6	5.07	5
Extrabudgetary resources, Windows I	17.59	20	15.9	17	10.9	12
Extrabudgetary resources Windows II	26.4	29	34.63	37	39.82	42
Total	**90.1**	**100**	**93.54**	**100**	**94.39**	**100**

Source: ITC annual reports 2014, 2015 and 2016.

22. Notwithstanding this trend, ITC projects continued to be in line with corporate priorities. The 2017 annual evaluation synthesis report indicated that seven out of nine projects were rated by evaluators as either "highly satisfactory" or "satisfactory" in terms of "project relevance", which is an assessment of the consistency of the objectives of an intervention with ITC corporate goals and comparative advantages, the client country's development strategy or policy priorities, as well as the beneficiaries' needs. Of the nine projects evaluated, four were independent evaluations conducted by ITC and five were evaluations commissioned by funders and co-financiers. The average relevance rating of the funder-commissioned evaluations was slightly higher as compared with those conducted by ITC.[11]

23. In addition to the six focus areas, ITC has geographic priorities. The new strategic plan 2018–2021 stipulates that ITC is committed to ensuring that at least 80 per cent of its country-level interventions benefit least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, small-island developing States, small vulnerable economies, post-conflict and fragile States and sub-Saharan Africa. Its annual report 2016 indicated that over 85 per cent of country specific assistance already went to these priority countries.[12]

24. Overall, efforts to sharpen programme focus and balance client and donor priorities with corporate priorities were reflected in ITC strategic plans. The strategic process was, however, not based on a global needs assessment, as indicated at the time of the evaluation (i.e., the caveat to the recommendation). According to ITC staff

[10] Consultative Committee for the ITC Trust Fund report.

[11] See ITC, 2017 annual evaluation synthesis report, table 2. Available from www.uneval.org/evaluation/reports.

[12] ITC annual report 2016, p. 2. Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/working-with-itc/corporate-documents/annual-report/.

interviewed, lack of data was not the reason, as ITC has a considerable amount of global trade data.[13] The main reason for not conducting a global needs assessment was that ITC staff believed that it would not serve the purpose. ITC had had negative experiences with such a "top-down" approach in 2006, when six selected country programmes, which had been prepared on the basis of a global needs assessment, could not mobilize the necessary funding for the projects. The new strategic plan (2018–2021) was developed on the basis of (a) experience that has shown that ITC had selected the right areas in the prevailing strategy (2014–2017) in which ITC has a comparative advantage vis-à-vis other actors;[14] (b) the areas that are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) ITC priority countries that adhere to United Nations country categories; and (d) donor priorities that cannot be ignored given the significant share of extrabudgetary resources. The new strategic plan 2018–2021 indicated that, over the next strategy period, ITC intends to integrate new data and analytical tools, make needs assessments and benchmarking surveys more granular and aggregate the data in a single database.[15]

25. ITC staff interviewed indicated that the position of ITC is clearer today than it was three years ago in terms of thematic priorities (i.e. focus areas). Discussions and consultations on the thematic priorities and the formulation of the new strategic plan included feedback received from stakeholders and were at a higher level, not only at the project level. However, ITC could not clearly demonstrate the methodology it used to identify and target the regions, countries and industries most in need of its expertise.

26. Given that the recommendation was initially accepted by ITC with a caveat regarding the appropriateness of a global needs assessment and with ITC efforts to sharpen its strategic focus in order to better align corporate priorities with client priorities and donor priorities, the recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 3
Revise the project approval protocol

27. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

> To ensure the cascading of overall corporate priorities to the operational level, the programme and project approval protocol should be revised to ensure that all projects adequately address the following areas before being approved:
>
> (a) A clear indication of how the intervention's objectives align with identified corporate priorities;
>
> (b) Evidence that a needs assessment has been undertaken, alongside beneficiary and donor consultations, in prioritizing the country and industry at hand with the specific intervention;
>
> (c) Evidence that key risks have been identified and assessed, and a corresponding risk management plan enacted;

[13] Making trade information available to businesses in developing countries has been the raison d'être of ITC. ITC provides online market intelligence for users in developing countries. These global public goods — trade map, market access map and standards map — hold data from more than 190 countries (see ITC annual report 2016, p. 22).

[14] ITC stakeholder survey (April 2017) and consultation session with member States and specific country groupings.

[15] ITC strategic plan 2018–2021, p. 11. Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/working-with-itc/corporate-documents/strategic-plan/.

(d) A monitoring and evaluation plan for the intervention, commensurate with the intervention's size and overall risk profile, including indicators speaking to results achieved for assisted beneficiaries.

Indicator of achievement: Revised programme and project approval protocol reflecting a clear cascading of overall corporate priorities, resulting in strong alignment between projects and corporate priorities in an increasing number of projects

28. At the time of the evaluation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS (2014–2015), ITC was developing a new project portal that would link disparate aspects of the project cycle management process to allow ITC to track, plan and report in a single workflow.[16] Recommendation 3 was intended to contribute to the development of this new project portal, by ensuring that the portal would enhance the alignment of projects with corporate priorities, strengthen the needs-based development of projects, and strengthen project risk management and monitoring and evaluation.

29. The new project portal was implemented with the entire portfolio of ITC projects managed through the new system as of 1 January 2016. The portal encompassed the complete project cycle, including the project planning phase. The review assessed the extent to which the new project portal adequately addressed the four areas identified by the recommendation.

30. **Project alignment with corporate priorities.** ITC developed a corporate results framework and all new programmes and projects were required to refer to this framework. The new project portal specifically required an indication of how a new project was aligned with the corporate strategy, the focus areas and programmes. Project outcome indicators had to be linked to at least one of the seven corporate outcome indicators (reported to the United Nations Secretariat) which ensured alignment and aggregation at corporate level allowing corporate monitoring and decision-making.

31. **Needs assessment.** Both the project idea template and the project plan template included a "needs assessment" section in the relevance chapter. Each functional area of ITC developed diagnostic tools and methodologies to prioritize partner needs. One example was the due diligence of institutional project partners, which included a capacity and risk assessment. Similarly, the ITC benchmarking tool provides trade and investment support institutions with an independent and objective assessment of their institutional situation, efficiency and performance. ITC quality assurance process at the project level ensured that needs assessment was systematically conducted for all projects.

32. **Risk assessment.** The project template in the new project portal included the mandatory requirement to identify and assess risks and assumptions. Moreover, the risk management plan showed how the risks will be managed and reflected "the probability of occurring" and the "impact on project results" if they were to occur. The plan described what would be done should the risk materialize, i.e. the "risk reduction measures".

33. **Monitoring and evaluation plan.** The project plan template in the new project portal required information on the planned monitoring and evaluation activities. The monitoring plan included baselines and targets and showed in detail how, when and by whom each indicator would be measured. The evaluation plan summarized anticipated evaluation arrangements and responsibilities to be undertaken by ITC and/or counterpart(s). The quality of these plans was assessed as part of the project

[16] E/AC.51/2015/8, para. 26.

design and quality assurance process. The project plan template included a separate chapter on evaluation.

34. ITC staff expressed the view that, as a result of the new project portal and the fact that all projects have to be in the new project portal in order to be approved, the overall quality of the projects' logical frameworks showed improvement over the last two years. There was much better alignment with corporate priorities and much more data was available, although the verification of data, to some extent, remained a challenge.

35. Overall, as each of the four areas identified in the recommendation has been adequately addressed through the new project portal, the recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 4
Improve International Trade Centre capacity in the generation of evidence of results and the cost-effectiveness of its work

36. Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

> ITC should improve its capacity to generate credible evidence on the results its interventions have achieved for its beneficiaries and clients, and on these interventions' cost-effectiveness. Such improvements entail, at minimum:
>
> (a) Development of a risk-based evaluation plan, identifying higher-risk interventions requiring individualized evaluation attention and lower-risk interventions for which a bundled evaluation approach is adequate;
>
> (b) A monitoring and evaluation capacity development plan for equipping programme staff with monitoring and evaluation skills;
>
> (c) Continued roll-out of the integrated project portal, including finalization and use of the costing methodology;
>
> (d) Completion of the impact assessment methodology, ensuring that these methods include non-perceptual, verifiable documentary evidence of impacts to complement the perceptual evidence garnered through the client relationship management database;
>
> (e) Development of clear guidelines on what constitutes a client in the client relationship management database;
>
> (f) Revision of the Centre's 2008 evaluation policy and of the reporting lines of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit to ensure that the present recommendation and aspects of recommendation 5 are adequately implemented at the direct behest of the Executive Director of ITC.
>
> Indicator of achievement: The actions described in the recommendation are undertaken, and their meaningful follow-through monitored, resulting in credible evidence on the results interventions have achieved for the Centre's beneficiaries and clients, and at what cost

37. The recommendation addressed the need for ITC to generate credible evidence, as it had gathered little evidence to document results achieved beyond the level of outputs. At the time of the evaluation, it was not possible to identify projects with compelling evidence as to whether or not ITC projects succeeded in achieving the intended outcomes.[17] The Centre's lack of investment in monitoring and evaluation applied to programmes and projects of all types and sizes.[18] While ITC was refining

[17] Ibid., para. 19.
[18] Ibid., para. 22.

its impact assessment methods, there was no evidence at the time that ITC intended to undertake a more appropriately rigorous approach to impact measurement: the structural arrangements did not afford the monitoring and evaluation function sufficient operational independence to generate credible results information. An earlier finding from a 2013[19] assessment had indicated that the ITC evaluation policy was seen as only moderately adhering to the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.[20] Prior assessments also showed that ITC had not been able to demonstrate linkages between results achieved and resources that it had allocated.[21]

38. The present review assessed each of the five elements required by the recommendation, as follows.

39. **Risk-based evaluation plan.** Since 2016, the Evaluation Unit has followed a risk-based approach to identify the interventions subject to evaluation in the ITC evaluation work programme. That practice was formalized in the revised evaluation policy (2015), in which it was stated that the selection criteria and priority setting shall take into consideration the results of a risk assessment.[22] While the evaluation policy did not provide further details on the risk assessment methodology, the evaluation work programme for 2016 indicated the use of a risk assessment methodology. The methodology was based on a rating of several risk factors, which included donor sensitiveness, budget, delivery complexity and accountability. The work programme also provided the actual risk assessment of the proposed evaluations for 2016 and 2017.[23] While the evaluation work programme for 2017 and 2018 did not provide a detailed risk assessment similar to that for the 2016–17 work programme, it stressed that a risk assessment was used for the selection of the evaluations, which was confirmed by ITC staff. This element of the recommendation has been implemented.

40. **Monitoring and evaluation capacity development.** The ITC Independent Evaluation Unit developed comprehensive evaluation guidelines (July 2017) which covered a large number of pertinent topics ranging across monitoring and evaluation plans, the process of conducting evaluations, quality checklists and ready-to-use templates. This was a useful resource for ITC staff and could significantly contribute to monitoring and evaluation capacity development. The Independent Evaluation Unit prepared a monitoring and evaluation online training programme for project managers, to be delivered through the ITC online trade academy. The online training is expected to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2018. The unit organized several ad hoc training sessions with staff on topics such as the ITC evaluation policy and the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development standard for measuring results. The Independent Evaluation Unit provided advice to project managers whose projects were evaluated or self-evaluated. The introduction of project completion reports required staff to be familiar with the evaluation criteria outlined in the evaluation policy. ITC did not have records available for review by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS as to who and how many persons benefited from coaching and advice provided by the Independent Evaluation Unit, and, as the online trainings scheduled to begin in 2018 had not yet started, actual capacity development appeared to be limited. This element of the recommendation was partially implemented.

[19] Independent assessment of Secretariat evaluation functions, Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS, 2013.

[20] E/AC.51/2015/8, paras. 28 and 30.

[21] Ibid., para. 42, footnote, "For example, the 2006 and 2014 evaluations of ITC; Board of Auditors reports A/63/5 (Vol. III), para. 77, A/65/5 (Vol. III), para. 78, etc.".

[22] ITC evaluation policy, 2nd ed., June 2015, para. 39.

[23] 2016 evaluation work programme, pp. 6–8.

41. **Costing methodology.** ITC did not have a finalized costing methodology. The development of a real-time cost-tracking tool was postponed as a result of the move from the ITC enterprise resource planning system to Umoja, the United Nations enterprise resource planning system in late 2015. During 2017, Umoja functionality for structuring budgets was increasingly used for output-based budgets and expenditure tracking. ITC also improved its reporting on expenditures by focus area and by Sustainable Development Goal, based on data aggregation through the new project portal. The October 2017 report on the period 1 January–30 June 2017 to the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund contained reporting on delivery by focus area, programme, Sustainable Development Goal, country, country type, region and cost category.[24] Work was ongoing to address the costing methodology of specific interventions and results (taking into account the development of Umoja II). The delay in fully implementing this element of the recommendation will result in the limited ability of ITC to make informed decisions based on clear and credible indications of its overall efficiency and effectiveness, including value for money.[25] Thus, while some work had been done, this element of the recommendation was a work in progress and was partially implemented.

42. **Impact assessment methodology.** A review of the new evaluation guidelines showed that impact assessment was of importance to ITC. While there was no detailed description of a specific impact assessment methodology, several options were highlighted. Central to assessing impact was the use of theory of change[26] analysis.[27] Theories of change were developed for all 15 programmes.[28] The Guidelines recommended the use of interviews, surveys and national statistics to assess impact. Some specific impact measurement methodologies were piloted at the project level. For example, in 2016, ITC conducted an impact assessment of a coffee project in Uganda. The assessment took place three years after project completion and analysed the long-lasting economic and social impact on small coffee farmers, a private coffee trade association and on policymaking for coffee businesses in Uganda.[29] The review did not assess the quality of the impact assessment. In early 2017, ITC started to prepare project completion reports which required staff to provide evidence in terms of higher-level results (i.e. beyond output level). Every project was required to report on impact vis-à-vis Sustainable Development Goal targets. When inputting project information in the new project portal, project managers were required to indicate to which Sustainable Development Goals the project was expected to contribute. The ITC global public goods user survey showed some higher-level results of ITC work.[30] Overall, while significant steps had been taken with regard to a conceptual framework for impact assessment, a detailed description of how to apply the framework at the project level was not available. This element of the recommendation was a work in progress and was partially implemented. This view is shared by ITC staff.

[24] ITC, Report to the Consultative Committee of the ITC Trust Fund, 1 January–30 June 2017. Available from www.intracen.org/about/jag/itc_trust_fund/.

[25] *Evaluation of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, Synthesis Report* (Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Copenhagen, 2006). Available from www.itcevaluation.org/); Independent Evaluation of the International Trade Centre (2014), para. 310. Available from www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/About_ITC/How_ITC_Works/Evaluation/1%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf.

[26] A theory of change explains the intervention logic, i.e., how activities contribute to a chain of results that produce ultimate intended impacts.

[27] ITC evaluation guidelines, July 2017, para. 54.

[28] Example: Empowering women to trade programme document 2016–2021, p. 30.

[29] ITC, 2017 annual evaluation synthesis report, paras. 25 and 54–58.

[30] E.g., ITC market intelligence tools helped generate around $200 million in trade transactions in 2016 (ITC Annual Report 2016, p. 17).

43. **Guidelines on what constitutes a client.** The new ITC strategic plan 2018–2021 provided a clear description of its primary clients, which are micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The strategy explicitly mentioned women and young entrepreneurs, national Governments and trade and investment support institutions.[31] The new client relationship management system, which included the definition of client categories in the system, was viewed as a useful tool also for harvesting information at the output level (e.g. number of training courses, events, etc.). This element of the recommendation has been implemented.

44. **Revision of evaluation policy and reporting lines.** In June 2015, the Joint Advisory Group endorsed the revised evaluation policy. In June 2016, a peer review of the Evaluation Office indicated that the new evaluation policy did not provide for sufficient structural and functional independence of the Evaluation Unit, resulting in the recommendation that "the Evaluation Unit should be granted a distinct functional status, ideally separate from Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance and located within the office of and reporting directly to the Executive Director."[32] The independence of the Evaluation Office has, at least to some extent, since been strengthened. In late 2016, a direct reporting line to the Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director was established. The Evaluation Unit was renamed the ITC Independent Evaluation Unit.[33] However, the Unit continues to be a part of Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance, with a dual reporting structure: on evaluation results, the head of the Unit could approach the Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director directly. For any other business, such as the clearing of evaluation guidelines or training material, the head of the Unit continued to report to the Chief of Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance. The independence of the Unit is therefore determined to a large extent by the prevailing management approach. As institutional independence can be further strengthened, this element of the recommendation was partially implemented.

45. As a result of the incomplete implementation of the monitoring and evaluation capacity development, the incomplete costing methodology, the work in progress with regard to the implementation of the impact assessment methodology and the suboptimal institutional independence of the evaluation function, the recommendation was partially implemented.

Recommendation 5
Institutionalize cross-cutting issues gender, youth and the environment into projects

46. Recommendation 5 reads as follows:

> ITC should accelerate the integration of cross-cutting issues into its projects.
>
> This includes:
>
> (a) Strengthened capacity-development support for promoting integration of cross-cutting issues into project design;
>
> (b) Incorporating into the project approval process an appraisal of proposals' attention to all three cross-cutting areas, in accordance with the Centre's 2014 guidance on Project Approval Committee development markers on the cross-cutting issues;

[31] ITC strategic plan 2018–2021, pp. 9–11.
[32] Professional peer review of the evaluation function at the International Trade Centre, June 2016, paras. 171 and 183.
[33] ITC, 2017 annual evaluation synthesis report, p. 28.

(c) Sharpening conceptual clarity on the Centre's approach to the environment, clearly articulating whether the 2014 environment mainstreaming strategy implies heightened attention to minimizing the Centre's environmental footprint, explicitly supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and/or innovations that address environmental challenges, or something else.

Indicator of achievement: The actions described in the recommendation are undertaken, and their meaningful follow-through monitored, resulting in a clearer integration of cross-cutting issues in an increasing number of projects

47. The recommendation addressed the weakness of ITC integration of cross-cutting issues into project designs. ITC had three cross-cutting issues at the time of the evaluation:[34] gender, the environment and youth. Despite commendable advances, substantive integration of gender into ITC projects remained weak. While gender-disaggregated data on development outputs and outcomes were collected, monitoring and reporting on gender equity was unsystematic.[35] There was limited mainstreaming of environmental aspects in ITC projects and it was unclear whether the goal of the ITC 2014 environment mainstreaming strategy was to minimize its own environmental impact or support environmental innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises, or something else.[36]

48. The review assessed progress against the three elements of the recommendation. Since 2015, gender, youth and the environment have been elevated to corporate priorities because of their relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals and trade. Having specific programmes in each of these three cross-cutting areas was also seen as beneficial for developing appropriate approaches applicable in various situations. One of the six focus areas of ITC is "inclusive and green trade", in which there were key initiatives focusing on women (SheTrades) and youth ("Building youth entrepreneurship"). The triennial review indicated that, in particular on gender, ITC had become a strong advocate for women in trade. For example, it played a key role in the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Buenos Aires in December 2017. Since youth became a corporate priority about three years ago, ITC has committed to support the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. Some significant achievements, such as the Youth Empowerment Project in Gambia were funded through the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. The Trade and Environment Programme strengthened the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries to compete in environmental markets. The programme also addressed challenges relating to climate resilience and biodiversity loss. ITC provided analysis and support in different global value chains, including agri-food, natural products, fibres and leather.

49. **Capacity-development support for promoting integration of cross-cutting issues into project design.** ITC developed a new guide for project managers for mainstreaming the environment into the various projects.[37] On gender, there were guidelines from 2009/2010 which appeared to be no longer in use. For youth, no guides were available. While ITC conducted training on environmental mainstreaming, very little formal training on mainstreaming of the cross-cutting gender and youth issues was conducted. Capacity-building on cross-cutting issues took place not through formal training but primarily through tailored advice on individual project basis by the in-house experts. Capacity-building on cross-cutting

[34] E/AC.51/2015/8, para. 46.
[35] Ibid., para. 51.
[36] E/AC.51/2015/8, para. 48.
[37] ITC, "Environmental Mainstreaming: a guide for project managers" (2016).

issues was held systematically by the project design task force during the project design phase, as the new project portal required each project to show how it contributed to cross-cutting issues. Other capacity-development activities were internal meetings on cross-cutting issues, such as a presentation given on gender research results to ITC staff. Likewise, events such as the ITC annual World Export Development Forum showcased success stories of young entrepreneurs. ITC performance was reported as good in the 2016 report on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).[38] This element of the recommendation has been implemented.

50. **Project approval process.** Each of the 15 ITC programmes explicitly addressed the three cross-cutting issues of the environment, gender and youth. These programmes served as guiding frameworks for projects, with the objectives formulated at the programme level taken up at the project level. Moreover, the new project portal required each project to show how it contributed to the cross-cutting issues of gender, youth and the environment. These "development markers" were included in every new project design and assessed as part of the project appraisal process. The ratings given included: "high", showing specific outputs on gender, youth or environment; "moderate", with the cross-cutting issues incorporated; or "low", with no integration. Each project was required to link the project impact with Sustainable Development Goal targets, including on gender, youth and the environment, where appropriate, and had to report accordingly. This facilitated results reporting at the corporate level. This element of the recommendation has been implemented.

51. **Conceptual clarity on mainstreaming the environment.** ITC developed a new guide for project managers on systematically mainstreaming environmental considerations into its work.[39] The guide provided project managers with tools to assess environmental considerations in project planning and implementation, in order to mitigate risks, enhance resilience and seize opportunities to expand trade in sustainable goods and services. The guidelines contained, among other elements:

(a) A concept of environmental mainstreaming;[40]

(b) Guidance on completing the environmental section of the cross-cutting issues and development markers section of a project plan;

(c) A list of indicative questions to help project managers consider specific environmental aspects of project plans;

(d) A matrix to identify key environmental opportunities and risks covering a range of sectors;

(e) Guidance on the environmental rating system and minimum environmental ratings;

(f) Guidance on finding appropriate outputs and indicators for environment in the logical framework of a project;

(g) A detailed matrix of key environmental concerns by sector, with recommended sources of further information.

52. The guide appeared helpful in sharpening the conceptual clarity of the ITC approach towards the environment. This element of the recommendation has been implemented.

[38] 2016 UN-SWAP report.
[39] ITC, "Environmental Mainstreaming".
[40] Ibid., p. 4.

53. ITC has significantly advanced since 2015 in promoting women, youth and the environment in trade. Although the capacity-development support for promoting integration of cross-cutting issues can be further strengthened by updating the gender guidelines and preparing guidelines for youth, overall, the recommendation has been implemented.

III. Conclusion

54. ITC has taken significant steps to implement all recommendations contained in the evaluation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS of 2015. ITC is more focused on core corporate priorities as compared with three years ago. Also, there is overall a better alignment of corporate priorities with client and donor priorities. In parallel, specific ITC projects are better aligned with corporate priorities. ITC makes better use of results-based management tools such as logical frameworks and theory of change methodology. The reporting and evidence generation on results, including higher-level results, has improved. Finally, ITC has made an effort through its programmes and projects to advance the promotion of women, youth and the environment in trade. While there have been some positive changes to the work of ITC as a result, a measurable impact of the implementation of the recommendations remains to be fully assessed.

55. Three important changes remain to be fully effected. To allow ITC to strengthen its results orientation and align with its needs-based strategic priorities, the shift from earmarked to unearmarked resources, despite the adoption of a more strategic approach to resource mobilization, is yet to happen. Unearmarked resources would further allow ITC to base its projects on its own corporate rather than the donor's priorities. There remains a continued need to enhance the capacity development support for cross-cutting issues as well as the impact assessment of ITC work. The structural independence of the evaluation function can be further enhanced by abolishing the dual reporting line. The ITC Independent Evaluation Unit should exclusively report to the Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director on all matters. The second reporting line to Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance should be abolished.

(*Signed*) Heidi **Mendoza**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services

March 2018

Annex*

Comments from the International Trade Centre

The International Trade Centre (ITC) extends its appreciation to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for its thorough triennial review and for the opportunity to provide comments.

ITC is pleased that OIOS has recognized the significant accomplishments of ITC in implementing all recommendations contained in the OIOS evaluation by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of Office of Internal Oversight Services of 2015 and in the 2014 funder-led independent evaluation of the ITC, resulting in a more focused and results-driven organization.

Following the recommendations received, the management of ITC has put considerable emphasis on accountability to its stakeholders, documenting and communicating regularly on the organization's progress in implementing the jointly agreed action plans that resulted from the evaluation recommendations. ITC strengthened its entire results-based management system, adopting a more holistic, data-driven approach to strategic planning and budgeting; aligning programme and project approval protocols to firmly established corporate priorities under a corporate theory of change; reinforcing its approach to objective needs assessments, while paying attention to monitoring, evaluation and risk management. ITC has also advanced the promotion of women, youth and the environment in trade, both through programmes directly targeting these client groups, as well as through mainstreaming their interests into all ITC programmes and projects.

ITC agrees with the spirit of the three specific changes that according to OIOS' assessment remain to be fully effected:

(a) The shift from earmarked to unearmarked resources, despite the adoption of a more strategic approach to resource mobilization, was yet to happen

ITC agrees that unearmarked resources are preferable to hard-earmarked resources and ITC will continue its efforts to increase the amount of unearmarked resources in collaboration with its funders (having already successfully raised it in 2017 and for 2018). However, this is a challenge that concerns the whole United Nations system, as recognized in resolution 71/243, adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2016, and re-emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General of 21 December 2017 on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda (A/72/684-E/2018/7). The challenge faced with the continuing fragmented nature of the system's funding and how it is inconsistent with the principles of integration and coordination, is further discussed in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system, 2018 (A/73/63-E/2018/8). Given this funding environment, it is questionable to what extent ITC on its own can achieve such a target and be accountable for it. ITC will continue to explore what it can do *differently and better to increase its share of unearmarked resources*, in collaboration with its funders. Please note that OIOS conducted an audit in 2017 on ITC use of

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services presents the full text of comments received from the International Trade Centre. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

unearmarked resources, and noted the very positive feedback from funders on the organization's performance.[1]

(b) A continued need to enhance the impact assessment of ITC work

ITC agrees that generating compelling evidence on the results achieved by ITC interventions and assessing the cost-effectiveness of these interventions has to be an ongoing endeavour. ITC has made significant progress over recent years, introducing innovative pilots for impact evaluations, structured evaluation guidelines, systematic tracking of project outcomes in the context of a corporate results framework, costing of ITC work in relation to focus areas, programmes, Sustainable Development Goal contributions and more. The goal to assess impact and prove value for money will remain an organizational priority, and ITC methodologies to achieve this are subject to an approach of continuous improvement. As stated in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, ITC will continue to work on impact assessment methodologies. In 2018/19 the focus will be on the development of a tool to measure the impact of trade and investment support institution services on micro, small and medium-sized enterprise competitiveness, trade and employment, and on enhancing ITC methodology to assess the impact of ITC work with micro-entrepreneurs at the base of the pyramid.[2]

(c) Enhancement of the structural independence of the evaluation function by abolishing the dual reporting line. The Independent Evaluation Unit should exclusively report to the Executive/Deputy Executive Director on all matters

ITC agrees that its Independent Evaluation Unit needs to be able to work independently. In 2015, ITC invited a professional peer review of its evaluation function, conducted by the Evaluation Network of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee and the United Nations Evaluation Group. The peer review, which was completed in 2016, assessed the evaluation function, its strategic fit in the organization, good practices and areas for improvement to better support achieving the strategic objectives of the organization. The peer review panel was comprised of three senior members chosen from bilateral and multilateral evaluation functions.[3]

Considering the specifics of ITC, the Panel recommended two options for the Independent Evaluation Unit placement in the ITC organization chart to ITC Management: The Evaluation Unit should either be granted a distinct functional status, ideally separate from Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance and located within the office of and reporting directly to the Executive Director, or, alternatively, continue within Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance but with a separate functional status with direct reporting/communication line with the Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director. ITC adopted and implemented the second recommendation. The Independent Evaluation Unit has a distinct functional status within Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance, which is part of the Office of the Executive Director, with a direct reporting and communication line to the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director. The Strategic Planning, Performance and Governance setting and support is for strategic leverage for the Independent Evaluation Unit to implement the evaluation policy and evaluation guidelines, and to support the corporate results framework.[4] With the implementation

[1] See Internal Audit Division, OIOS, Report 2017/152 "Audit of the International Trade Centre projects and activities funded by unearmarked funds (21 December 2017). Available from https://oios.un.org/page?slug=report.

[2] See ITC strategic plan 2018–2021.

[3] See Evaluation Network (June 2016). Professional peer review of the evaluation function ITC. Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/previous-jags/.

[4] See ITC management response to the professional peer review of the ITC Evaluation Function (2016). Available from www.intracen.org/itc/about/how-itc-works/previous-jags/.

of this peer review recommendation. ITC considers this recommendation as now closed, and intends to retain the present structure, which ensures the independence of the evaluation function while having additional operational benefits.

ITC appreciates the quality of the OIOS review, and thanks OIOS and its staff for the good cooperation in its conduct.

United Nations E/AC.51/2018/9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 March 2018

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-eighth session
Organizational session, 19 April 2018
Substantive session, 4–29 June 2018*
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda**
Coordination questions: New Partnership for Africa's Development

United Nations system support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) since June 2017. It is organized around the nine realigned clusters adopted by the Regional Coordination Mechanism of the United Nations entities working in Africa at its eighteenth session, in 2017.

During the reporting period, the United Nations system continued to support the implementation of NEPAD, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa. In line with the Secretary-General's vision, the United Nations and the African Union signed two joint cooperation frameworks: the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, in April 2017, and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in January 2018.

The report underlines the need for United Nations entities to further enhance coordination and coherence in supporting the development of Africa and calls for more support in mobilizing resources, enhancing partnerships and improving synergies and coordination in the implementation of all development frameworks.

* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
** E/AC.51/2018/1.

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I. Introduction

1. At its forty-fifth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report to the Committee at its forty-sixth session, and annually thereafter, on the support provided by the United Nations system to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (see A/60/16, para. 237). The recommendation was endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 72/9.

II. Support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

2. The present report highlights activities implemented by the United Nations system in support of NEPAD since June 2017, organized around nine realigned thematic clusters and topics corresponding to the priorities of NEPAD, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was prepared on the basis of inputs received from United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and from departments of the Secretariat in response to the request by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for contributions with respect to key activities, programmes and projects implemented in the period 2017–2018. In line with the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the report presents results and impact in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

3. The report benefited from the preparatory work for the third report of the United Nations monitoring mechanism to review commitments made towards Africa's development.

A. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industry, trade, agriculture and agro-processing and regional integration

4. With a view to promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) organized three meetings in 2017 under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The first event, held in Senegal in March 2017, brought a regional perspective to the challenges and opportunities related to achieving Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in Africa. At the second event, held in Zimbabwe in April 2017, the contributions of agriculture and agro-industries to sustainable and resilient food systems and the achievement of Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals were discussed. Those two preparatory events culminated in the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council in May 2017. As a result, two initiatives, the UNIDO Programme for Country Partnership and the Accelerated Agriculture and Agro-industry Development Initiative PLUS of FAO and UNIDO, were scaled up for the achievement of Goal 9, thereby meeting aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063. The outcome fed into the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017.

5. In October 2017, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized, in collaboration with ECA, the Department of Public Information, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism and the African Union Commission, a high-level event on financing infrastructure and agricultural development in Africa. In order to mobilize financing for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, participants in the event called for domestic resource mobilization to be increased through eliminating illicit financial flows and reducing excessive tax incentives for foreign direct investment, while leveraging official development aid for financing infrastructure development and enhancing market access for African agricultural products.

6. During the integration segment of the Economic and Social Council in May 2017, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized a special session on eradicating poverty in Africa to highlight efforts to adopt an integrated and holistic approach to poverty and sustainable development while aligning Agenda 2063 with the 2030 Agenda. In December 2017, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ECA, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNDP and the International Organization of la Francophonie organized a symposium on governance for the implementation of the sustainable development commitments in Africa, held in Addis Ababa, to further promote the joint implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

7. During the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2017, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, together with Austria and Zambia, organized a side event to discuss how landlocked developing countries could leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships and public-private partnerships to strengthen infrastructure, industrialization and innovation in support of the achievement of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

8. The United Nations Global Compact organized several events, including one entitled "Responsible business forum: making global goals local business" in November 2017, to enhance private sector engagement and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships to address key challenges and opportunities across the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. In support of the third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, 2016–2025, UNIDO organized, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union, ECA and the African Development Bank, a high-level event entitled "From political commitments to actions on the ground" in September 2017, with a view to reaffirming the commitment towards socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable industrialization in Africa.

10. UNIDO organized a symposium entitled "African industrial development: a precondition for an effective and sustainable Continental Free Trade Area" in Vienna and a high-level event on the same theme, in partnership with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union Commission and UNCTAD, in New York, identifying opportunities of the Continental Free Trade Area for maximizing intra-African trade and enhancing competitiveness. In order to support inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Africa, UNIDO has been implementing 239 projects, the Programme for Country Partnership and 19 country programmes.

11. In the trade sector, in July 2017, the World Trade Organization (WTO) held its sixth Global Review on Aid for Trade, during which a joint report of WTO and ECA

entitled "Promoting connectivity in Africa: the role of Aid for Trade in boosting intra-African trade", showcasing African responses to the Aid for Trade monitoring and evaluation exercise, was launched. Aid for Trade benefiting Africa amounted to $14.1 billion in 2015, close to 35 per cent of total Aid for Trade flows, with most of the funds allocated to economic infrastructure and road transport.

12. Through its Automated System for Customs Data programme, UNCTAD enhanced the capacity of 27 African countries to increase revenue collection and reduce clearing times and costs, thereby supporting Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals and aspiration 2 of Agenda 2063.

13. The Standards and Trade Development Facility assisted African countries with compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards for trade and sustainable development, approving eight new grants for African countries, including grants to strengthen phytosanitary capacity and promote trade from Guinea, reduce aflatoxin contamination in maize in Burkina Faso, prioritize sanitary and phytosanitary investments for market access and value chains in Madagascar, improve the safety and quality of Penja pepper in Cameroon and develop a digital system for pest surveillance and seed traceability in Nigeria.

14. In the agriculture sector, World Bank lending for agriculture and rural development to sub-Saharan African countries amounted to $1.7 billion from July 2016 to June 2017 and stood at $600 million from July 2017 to January 2018. The World Bank provided support along the whole agriculture and agribusiness value chain by employing a food systems approach, focusing on the increased adoption and use of climate-smart agriculture practices and technologies.

15. Through the Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa programme, the International Trade Centre (ITC) helped Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to increase the value of business transactions with India to create jobs and opportunities in agriculture, horticulture, leather and information technology.

16. The Enhanced Integrated Framework has been collaborating with FAO to support better trade linkages in the investment plans of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at the country level. Pilot analyses were undertaken in Mozambique, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Three projects were approved to facilitate trade in livestock and livestock products in Ethiopia, promote plant-based trade from Zambia to countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and mainstream sanitary and phytosanitary investments into the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme and other national policy frameworks in countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

17. UNIDO supported a $3-million capacity-building project for more than 9,000 coffee farmers, funded by Italy, to increase incomes and improve coordination in the coffee value chain in Ethiopia and to enhance the quantity and quality of exported coffee. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) also implemented a project, funded by Irish Aid, in Ethiopia to enhance agricultural production and food security through improved weather, climate and agrometeorological services and advisories at the regional, district, village and farm levels.

18. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and FAO supported the establishment of a food safety surveillance system in Benin, helping the country's farmers to resume their pineapple exports to the European Union.

19. The Common Fund for Commodities supported the Malawi Enterprise Development Fund in scaling up access to finance for smallholder potato farmers, addressing about 250,000 farmers, with an average increase in net income of $120 per annum through finance provided for potato production on 45,000 ha of agricultural land.

20. Under the Cost of Hunger in Africa study, a key advocacy tool to increase commitments of policymakers and decision makers to prioritizing nutrition investments at the national level, the World Food Programme (WFP) supported the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in implementing the study in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, bringing the number of countries that completed the study to 16. In this context, WFP, ECA and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency organized the first expert group forum on reducing child stunting in Africa, focusing on strategies to mainstream nutrition into national budgets and plans.

21. WFP continued to support the implementation of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, one of the flagship programmes of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculiure Development Programme, including through commissioning a continental study on sustainable school feeding across the Africa Union and supporting the commemoration of the Africa Day of School Feeding, observed every year since 2016 on 1 March. As a result, it contributed to promoting local development, fighting food and nutrition insecurity and disease, linking local small producers to markets and stimulating agriculture production.

22. FAO contributed to the establishment of the pan-African parliamentary alliance for food security and nutrition to strengthen legal frameworks for an enabling environment for food security and nutrition, including the right to adequate food in the region. In November 2017, FAO engaged with the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on promoting gender equality in land-based agricultural investments in Africa and with the Parliament of Rwanda on policy dialogue on the nexus between the country's agriculture policy and gender equality to advance the commitments of the African Union towards ending hunger and malnutrition by 2025 and supporting efforts to improve the lives and livelihoods of women.

23. The Common Fund for Commodities helped a tea processing company in Burundi to upgrade and expand its value chain. Through better husbandry and plucking practices, the project will increase smallholder yields, quality and profitability.

24. On regional integration, UNCTAD supported four sessions of the Continental Free Trade Area negotiation forum, held in May, October and November 2017. Under the planned COMESA, East African Community and SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area, UNCTAD supported the collection of data in 12 pilot countries in Africa on comprehensive non-tariff measures.

25. UNCTAD initiated the development of the ECOWAS regional services policy review, the aim of which is to support regional integration and ensure coherence in the negotiating positions of Member States across various trade forums. UNCTAD also coordinated data collection on non-tariff measures in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

26. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided strategic and technical advice in support of the development of the Protocol

to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and the Right of Establishment and its implementation plan, which were adopted at the thirtieth African Union summit, in January 2018.

B. Infrastructure development

27. The World Bank Group continued to support infrastructure projects in the framework of the flagship Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa of the African Union Commission. The World Bank committed $3.9 billion to national and regional energy, transport and information and communications technology projects in sub-Saharan Africa from July 2016 to June 2017 and a further $900 million from July 2017 to January 2018.

28. UNIDO implemented a $1.4-million project to strengthen the infrastructure of Namibia to boost exports in fish and meat products and improve the product value chain.

29. With respect to energy, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supported the development of renewable and clean energy and energy efficiency in African countries. In rural areas of the Gambia, UNIDO implemented a project that generated more than 900 MWh and saved about 1,100 tons of carbon dioxide. It also ensured that solutions were tailored to the needs of women and allowed for their active participation in distributing and marketing the technologies.

30. With regard to transport, the International Civil Aviation Organization held, in November 2017, a world aviation forum on financing the development of aviation infrastructure, at which a plan of action was adopted for the development of aviation infrastructure in Africa. The plan of action contributed to the mobilization of funds for aviation and was submitted to the thirtieth African Union summit in January 2018.

31. The International Civil Aviation Organization and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) supported the African Union Commission in the promotion of the Single African Air Transport Market, which was launched at the thirtieth African Union summit. As a result, a record number of 23 African countries have now joined and signed the declaration of commitment to the establishment of the market, paving the way for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999.

32. With respect to information and communications technology, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) supported new draft laws on information and communications technology, a piece of secondary legislation and the creation of new specialized regulatory agencies for frequencies and information and communications technology in Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo. In Uganda, ITU supported the development of the Digital Uganda Vision to integrate and harmonize all policies related to information and communications technology.

33. In order to address the growing digital gap between developed and developing countries, ITU assisted African countries in developing their digital economy policies and national broadband plans and prepared a case study on the One Network Area roaming framework for the countries of the East Africa Northern Corridor, which was adopted as a benchmark for roaming.

34. In compliance with its International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, the International Maritime

Organization (IMO) supported African countries in reducing the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water.

C. Human capital development, health, nutrition, science, technology and innovation

35. The World Bank Group lending and commitments for social and human development in Africa amounted to $2.6 billion from July 2017 to January 2018. The commitments covered mainly health and social protection projects, with significant investment in strengthening health systems in order to increase access and improve service delivery and pandemic response.

36. With respect to health, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage and the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Accelerating Change. Since the start of the second phase of the programme in 2014, more than 6,000 public declarations of abandonment of female genital mutilation have been made, nearly 2.4 million girls and women have received services for protection and care related to female genital mutilation and more than 18 million individuals have been reached.

37. UNICEF has supported countries in enhancing HIV programming for children and adolescents. As a result, more than 75 per cent of health facilities in 11 countries offer provider-initiated testing and counselling and 43,529 HIV-positive women have continued treatment in humanitarian settings.

38. In January 2018, UNICEF, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) joined the African Union Commission and the Organization of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS in launching a new continental campaign, known as "Free to shine", to accelerate the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. IAEA, WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer conducted reviews to assess national capacities and provide recommendations to strengthen the cancer control programmes of the Congo, Swaziland and Togo.

39. In partnership with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic Development Bank and WHO, IAEA provided advisory support to African countries in developing proposals to secure concessional loans and/or grants from the Islamic Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and in identifying additional potential funding partners to fund national cancer control programmes.

40. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) rehabilitated a multimedia centre in Dosso, the Niger, to facilitate the access of women and young people to information related to reproductive health and employment opportunities, to improve computer literacy for young girls and to organize distance training on key development issues.

41. The World Bank Group supported Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action, in particular the goals of addressing the data and gender gaps by rebalancing post-secondary education towards the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. In addition, the Africa Centres of Excellence project, funded by the World Bank, supported technical and applied science, technology, engineering and mathematics research. ITU trained about 200

professionals to promote the development of information and communications technology and broadband access across Africa.

42. In September 2017, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States facilitated the signing of the host country agreement and the financial and in-kind contributions agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Turkey, which resulted in pledges and disbursements of resources in support of the effective operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

D. Labour, employment creation, social protection, migration and mobility

43. During the review period, the International Labour Organization (ILO) continued to advocate more and better jobs, inclusive growth and improved employment prospects for young people in Africa. The contribution of ILO to the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency encompassed the development of knowledge products and statistics on labour migration.

44. In the area of labour statistics, the ILO guidelines will assist countries in producing harmonized and comparable indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 in line with international standards. They will also help in the creation of baseline indicators for the implementation of the commitments of the extraordinary summit on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development and the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063. ILO also assisted the African Union in developing a road map for the release of its first report on informal economy statistics in Africa in 2018.

45. Through the Joint Labour Migration Programme, ILO supported the revision of the migration policy framework of the African Union and the development of a plan of action (2018–2027), which were adopted at the thirtieth African Union summit in January 2018.

46. UNCTAD, the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR published a policy framework in April 2018 to support the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and vulnerable migrants and maximize their contribution in host economies through entrepreneurial activities.

47. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Department of Public Information, ECA, the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism organized a high-level event on addressing the nexus between climate change and migration and its implications for peace and security in Africa. The event provided a platform for raising awareness and discussing the nature and impact of and responses to climate change, migration and conflict in Africa. At the meeting, participants further sought to foster integrated policies and strategies, deepen cooperation and partnerships and enhance support for African efforts to address the nexus.

48. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, supported the reintegration of migrants and the fight against radicalization through job creation for the restoration of degraded lands and their productive base.

49. UNWTO and the Government of Zambia hosted an international conference on the theme "Promoting sustainable tourism: a tool for inclusive growth and community engagement in Africa" in November 2017. During the event, the South Luangwa National Park was declared the world's first sustainable wildlife park. In the Lusaka Declaration, the key role of sustainable tourism in reducing poverty was emphasized and stakeholders were encouraged to give a prominent role to sustainable tourism in their political and economic agendas.

E. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and young people

50. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized, in collaboration with UN-Women, a high-level side event on the margins of the sixty-second Commission on the Status of Women, entitled "African Women's Decade: stepping up action for and with rural women to 2020". The event raised global awareness of African Women's Decade, 2010–2020, women and girls and mobilized support for the accelerated implementation of the thematic priorities of the decade.

51. Within the consultations of the United Nations system on the draft African Union gender strategy (2018–2023), UNHCR expanded the strategy to include the forcibly displaced, stateless women and girls and migrants, who are affected the most by violence and conflicts.

52. Through its programme for the economic empowerment of women in the energy sector across East and Southern Africa, UN-Women contributed to ensuring that women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development.

53. ITC, through its SheTrades initiative, ensured that more African women engaged in trade and grew their businesses by harnessing trade policies, financial inclusion, gender-disaggregated data, public and private procurement, ownership rights and capacity-building, by using a web and mobile application and by hosting business events.

54. In November 2017, WIPO and the Japan Patent Office organized a regional forum on the theme "Innovation and intellectual property as engines for competitive agribusiness: empowering women researchers and entrepreneurs in Africa" in Morocco. The forum contributed to the development of women's skills in agricultural and agribusiness research by fostering innovation and using the intellectual property system for economic development and wealth creation.

55. IMO supported the establishment of the Women in the Maritime Sector in East and Southern Africa association and facilitated the establishment of a similar association for the West and Central Africa subregion, namely, the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association, in support of gender equality and the integration of women in the maritime industry.

56. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) supported the Pan-African Parliament on sexual and reproductive health and other gender-related issues, including female genital mutilation and combating traditional practices affecting the health of women and children.

57. UN-Women helped the Government of Guinea-Bissau to provide women and young female victims of gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and harmful practices with access to improved health-care services. A management unit to follow up on the

services provided to pregnant women and female victims of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS was established and launched in the Simão Mendes National Hospital in Bissau. UN-Women also helped to initiate a multisectoral programme to empower 5,000 local youth volunteers in the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence across the country.

58. UN-Women launched the HeForShe campaign, as well as 16 days of activism on gender-based violence, in Sierra Leone on 25 November 2017. At the launch, 500 men and women completed a 15 km walk, engaging more than 10,000 commuters and residents in the central business district and west end of Freetown on various messages to end violence against women and girls. Thirty members of the United Nations country team in Sierra Leone pledged to galvanize efforts to end violence against women and girls. As a result of this advocacy campaign, 300 rural women pledged to stop female genital mutilation in Sierra Leone.

59. UN-Women, UNICEF and UNFPA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence of Sierra Leone and Irish Aid, supported a national conference and a regional meeting on ending child marriage. The meeting helped to scale up interventions on ending child marriage in West and Central Africa, raise awareness of the prevalence of child marriage and formulate solutions to female genital mutilation, teenage pregnancy and harmful traditional practices.

60. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification facilitated gender mainstreaming in three projects, in Burkina Faso, Chad and the Niger, under the Front local environnemental pour une Union verte (FLEUVE) project, thereby strengthening the capacities of local communities by boosting investment in land restoration and creating employment opportunities.

61. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a break-out session on Africa during the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum in January 2018. At the session, the possible role of young African people in combating corruption at all levels was discussed and the need to promote the social, economic and political participation of young people was highlighted.

62. The United Nations Democracy Fund increased the inclusion of the needs of young people in local government policies in Mozambique, strengthened the engagement by young people in community peacebuilding activities in Burundi and supported amendments to legislation on the freedom of information in the Gambia.

63. UNCTAD, UNDP and Rwanda convened a continent-wide youth entrepreneurship forum, known as the "YouthConnekt Africa summit", in Rwanda in August 2017. The forum provided young people in Africa an opportunity to interact with continental leaders and the Chief Executive Officer of Alibaba and Special Adviser of UNCTAD for Youth Entrepreneurship and Small Business, Jack Ma. Following the summit, a select group of young African people attended a skill-upgrading session on entrepreneurship at Alibaba premises in China. In December 2017, through the African Entrepreneurship Policy Forum, UNCTAD and the Rwanda Development Board supported the development of an enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem.

64. ITC supported youth employment and entrepreneurship through its youth empowerment project in the Gambia, by improving the skills and employability of potential and returning migrants in accordance with the demands of the job market. The project offered possibilities for young people interested in moving into the commercial agriculture, service business or tourism sectors and addressed the root causes of irregular migration.

65. FAO facilitated training opportunities in agribusiness and entrepreneurship for small and medium agro-enterprises across Africa, with priority given to young people and women. Through the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security, FAO supported the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in the implementation in countries of projects focused on youth employment.

66. UNIDO implemented a $1.3-million project to promote entrepreneurship and technical skills among young people in Nigeria. The project built the capacities of 350 persons and delivered a gender-sensitive entrepreneurship syllabus that was implemented in 34 trade subjects.

F. Humanitarian matters and disaster risk management

67. OHCHR has developed a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, establishing a set of norms applicable in situations of peace and conflict that actors are obligated to respect. In addition, an operational plan has been designed to strengthen the capacity of the Joint Force to prevent human rights violations during its operations.

68. OHCHR has built a partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors, through a number of training programmes, to apply international human rights norms in implementing counter-terrorism measures. A fully fledged programme to train those actors is in place, consisting of four workshops to train about 100 trainers from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

69. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs organized, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, a panel discussion on the protection of civilians in Africa, with a focus on the situation in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day during Africa Humanitarian Week, in August 2017. As a result, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons of the Permanent Representatives Committee of the African Union made a commitment to spearhead the formal adoption of the draft guidelines on the protection of civilians in peace support operations of the Union.

70. Within the framework of the response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency, UNICEF supported 5,569 children formerly associated with armed groups in 2017. UNICEF and its partners also supported the enforcement of handover protocols in Chad and the Niger and facilitated the adoption of the action plan with the Civilian Joint Task Force in Nigeria, benefiting a total of 277,724 children.

71. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict continued to engage with parties to conflict to raise awareness of the plight of children affected by armed conflict. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations dialogue with armed groups led to the release of thousands of children from their ranks. The Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique issued command orders in May and September 2017, respectively, ordering the release of all associated children. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations supported the authorities with the implementation of the action plan to end child recruitment and sexual violence against children. In Mali and Nigeria, progress was made in the implementation of action

plans adopted in 2017 that aimed to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

72. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction facilitated and supported the broader participation of Africa in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Mexico in May 2017. The Office supported the development of the Africa common position, which contains seven concrete commitments to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Programme of Action for its Implementation in Africa.

73. As part of the United Nations system-wide approach to assist victims of the mudslide emergency in Sierra Leone in August 2017, UNHCR airlifted household items worth $55,000, deployed one staff member and provided shelter in kind (300 tents) and in cash-based interventions.

G. Environment, population and urbanization

74. The secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change supported the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and African countries with their preparations for the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification continued to provide capacity-building programmes to 46 African countries to set their land degradation neutrality targets.

75. The World Bank, through the multi-donor TerrAfrica Leveraging Fund, strengthened the capacity of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency to carry out its mandate of advocacy, mutual learning and resource mobilization and alignment among its member countries for sustainable land and water management actions. Furthermore, World Bank lending for environment and land and water management projects in Africa amounted to $1.8 billion from July 2016 to June 2017 and $700 million from July 2017 to January 2018.

76. UNIDO implemented the SwitchMed project for safeguarding the environment in Tunisia. The project facilitated the shift towards sustainable consumption and production by equipping Tunisian industry, entrepreneurs, civil society and policymakers with policy development skills. The project is expected to result in estimated annual savings of 35,227 tons of carbon dioxide, 445,000 m^3 of water, 111.2 GwH in energy and 9,700,000 euros for the 26 companies involved in the project.

77. In accordance with its policies and practices related to environmental protection, climate change, noise and local air quality, the International Civil Aviation Organization supported 12 African countries in their submission of action plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from international aviation.

78. In September 2017, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and UNDP convened a regional dialogue on nationally determined contributions for Africa, focusing on enhancing the understanding and implementation of the Paris Agreement and nationally determined contributions of African countries. The dialogue provided a high-level platform to support African countries in the process of moving towards the implementation of their nationally determined contributions.

79. WMO continued to support the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services in Africa to produce knowledge, information and services that

support effective decision-making on climate-sensitive sectors. The first phase of the adaptation programme of the Framework was successfully implemented in Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania.

80. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs contributed to five projects in the East African Community to support Member States in developing and strengthening environment statistics and integrated environmental-economic accounting for improved monitoring of sustainable development. National missions on strengthening environment statistics also took place in the Gambia and Namibia in February 2018.

81. UNFPA, ECA, the African Development Bank and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency provided support to advance the African Union road map on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth in more than 41 countries and advocated its adoption throughout the region. This support resulted in the adoption of a declaration, in which the Heads of State and Government of the African Union committed themselves to implementing the road map beyond 2017 and to report annually on progress with its implementation.

82. UNFPA trained youth leaders and university students on, and raised their awareness of, the demographic dividend. UNFPA also partnered with ECA to develop the demographic profile of African countries, in which the important trends and dynamics that are shaping the continent's push towards harnessing the demographic dividend were highlighted.

83. UNHCR provided support for the convening of the fourth Conference of African Ministers responsible for Civil Registration, held in Mauritania in December 2017, on the theme "Accelerating a coordinated improvement of civil registration and vital statistics for implementation and monitoring of the development agenda in Africa: review of progress and the way forward". The Conference enhanced the understanding of the centrality of civil registration and vital statistics in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and international human rights instruments.

84. In February 2018, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa convened a high-level event on the margins of the ninth World Urban Forum, in collaboration with ECA, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and with the engagement of a wide array of African stakeholders, on supporting the effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda to facilitate poverty eradication through urban job creation and entrepreneurship development in Africa. The event mobilized African stakeholders around ending all forms of poverty within the continental framework for the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

H. Advocacy, information, communications and culture

85. On the margins of the General Assembly debate on the development of Africa in October 2017, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, together with ECA, the Department of Public Information, the African Union, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism, organized Africa Week 2017 to advocate the joint and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. Throughout the week, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa provided a global policy platform for high-level African stakeholders to engage directly with the United Nations system, the private sector,

civil society, academia and the media. As part of the activities for the week, the Department of Public Information organized an event on how to leverage the continent's competitive advantages and growth sectors, as well as address the transport and logistics challenges on the continent, to support the Move Africa initiative of NEPAD.

86. In November 2017, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, ECA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, the secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Federation of African Journalists and the African Media Initiative, the third Africa senior media dialogue on the role of the media in Africa's development and the empowerment of women and their support to Agenda 2063. The Federation of African Journalists adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration, including 10 concrete recommendations on strengthening the capacity of the African media and empowering them to change and take ownership of the narrative on Africa and its development.

87. Throughout the year, the Department of Public Information produced news and features in the six United Nations official languages, as well as Kiswahili and Portuguese, about development issues and NEPAD activities. All 2017 editions of the *Africa Renewal* magazine of the Department of Public Information carried stories on the achievements and challenges of NEPAD and on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

88. African countries continued to host national events for World Environment Day, the most important day of the United Nations for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of the environment. African countries are also actively participating in global campaigns of UNEP, including Clean Seas, Wild for Life, Beat Pollution, Breath Life and Champions of the Earth.

I. Governance and peace and security

89. The United Nations Democracy Fund managed and funded 36 projects implemented by civil society organizations in Africa that focused on key themes such as youth engagement and the rights and empowerment of women. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Fund supported the civic participation of vulnerable youth by educating them on human rights and democratic citizenship issues. In Kenya, the Fund empowered women and young people living in informal settlements to participate more meaningfully in local governance.

90. In Kenya, UN-Women convened all women candidates for a networking platform in Nairobi in June 2017, where they were made aware of the importance of working together and the opportunities available to them from State and non-State actors. UN-Women partnered with youth organizations and networks in Kenya, including Youth Agenda, Africa Youth Trust and Youth Initiatives Kenya, to develop mobilization strategies, including through radio and social media campaigns, namely, the campaign using the hashtag #chaguamani, youth centres and bikes with placards as a medium to disseminate messages of peace and political tolerance, which enhanced access to information on the participation of young women in the elections in 2017. UN-Women also helped the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission to mobilize women, young people and persons with disabilities to register as voters in remote areas of the country. These initiatives enhanced access to evidence-based information on the participation of young women in the elections in 2017 and directly contributed to the increased participation of young people in the

electoral process. In Cameroon, ahead of the electoral process in 2018, UN-Women supported national stakeholders in conducting a wide advocacy initiative to increase the political participation of women.

91. UNCTAD, through its Global Cyberlaw Tracker, supported 52 African countries in adopting e-transaction laws for consumer and data protection from cyber criminals. To date, 33 African countries have adopted laws to protect consumers online, 50 have adopted laws on cybercrime and 43 have adopted laws on data protection.

92. The United Nations Global Compact launched the Global Compact Local Network in Kinshasa in September 2017, with a view to contributing to the improvement of the business environment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Through their inclusion in the network, a number of companies in the country committed themselves to developing corporate social responsibility strategies and measures.

93. The Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support continued to collaborate, through the United Nations Office to the African Union, with the African Union Commission to coordinate and support peace efforts in Africa within the guidelines of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. Progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Framework through joint consultations, assessments, annual conferences and enhanced technical-level interactions, which contributed to the harmonization of different strategic approaches, the development of a common understanding of conflicts in Africa and an increase in effectiveness. During the review period, joint field visits were conducted to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and the Lake Chad Basin.

94. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) continued to collaborate with the African Union Commission and ECOWAS to defuse tensions in the subregion. UNOWAS issued joint communiqués with the African Union and ECOWAS calling for a peaceful resolution of the political crisis in Togo. UNOWAS continued to help to sustain peace in Burkina Faso and the Gambia. In addition, a joint mission of the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations was conducted to Sierra Leone in November 2017, with a view to promoting a peaceful political environment ahead of the elections that took place in March 2018.

95. A joint United Nations-African Union high-level solidarity mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria was undertaken in July 2017, with the aim of revitalizing the participation and leadership of women in peace, security and development. UNOWAS undertook joint missions with representatives of ECOWAS, UN-Women, OHCHR and the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel to Cotonou, Praia and N'Djamena to advocate the adoption of national action plans as called for in Security Council resolutions on women, youth and peace and security.

96. In Nigeria, UN-Women facilitated the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in northern Nigeria and in the States of Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe. In the three States, the peace architecture was successfully reviewed from a gender and human rights perspective and their coordinating bodies and structures were identified. The findings and recommendations of the mapping exercise were validated by national and local stakeholders.

97. In Kenya, in collaboration with local institutions and civil society partners, UN-Women provided safe spaces for 475 women and girls who attended "women

peace cafés" in the Coast Region to share their experiences of violent extremism, including the stigma and discrimination that they face as victims. As active agents of peace, the beneficiaries also explored how they could use their roles as mothers, wives and sisters to prevent the escalation of any peculiar behaviour into harm by taking remedial steps through counselling or by seeking positive alternative measures.

98. In November 2017, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development organized a meeting on the role of African civil society in countering violent extremism in Africa. The meeting contributed to peace mediation and peacebuilding support by strengthening cooperation and coordination among African civil society organizations in further enhancing their participation in national, regional and international processes. The meeting called for increased international support of African civil society organizations in preventing violent extremism.

99. WFP, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development visited the African Union Commission, Ethiopia and South Sudan to show their solidarity in and commitment to jointly addressing the challenges facing Africa, including the nexus between peace, security and migration. In Somalia, WFP promoted the incorporation of food security and livelihoods into national peacebuilding plans and the national development plan, 2017–2019.

100. The Office for Disarmament Affairs provided national capacity-building programmes for the Lake Chad Basin countries affected by Boko Haram (Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria) to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to foreign terrorists. In November 2017, more than 50 participants from the four countries were trained on existing international standards relating to the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives.

101. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized a meeting on the theme "Role of early warning in silencing the guns: enhancing United Nations support for the peace and development dimensions of Agenda 2063" in July 2017. The meeting contributed to the strengthening of the effectiveness of early warning systems in Africa. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized a high-level meeting in September 2017 on the theme "Peace, security and development nexus: sharing research and knowledge on managing the transition from stabilization to long-term peacebuilding and development within African centres of excellence". As a result, a network of African experts and practitioners was established to provide advice to the Secretary-General and the Chair of the African Union Commission on managing transitions from stabilization to long-term peace and security in Africa.

III. Policy issues in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

A. Strengthening of the cluster system and enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

102. During the review period, the United Nations system consolidated its cluster system in line with NEPAD, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. In April 2017, at the eighteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism-Africa, the nine realigned clusters were confirmed. It was also confirmed that the programme of work of the clusters, 2016–2018, was fully aligned with the goals identified in the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and African Union Commission priorities.

103. With respect to cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, the partnership was strengthened in the areas of peace, security and development. The Secretary-General and the Chair of the African Union Commission signed the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, in April 2017, and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in January 2018. Under these frameworks, annual conferences of the United Nations and the African Union were launched in January 2017, with a view to enabling the exchange views on issues of interest to both bodies to create peace and stability in Africa.

B. Support to the mobilization of financial resources for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

104. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided more than 40 per cent of capacity development resources to sub-Saharan Africa. Capacity development resources focused on mobilizing domestic revenue, strengthening institutions and governance, deepening financial markets and improving data quality and availability. IMF has enhanced the provision of its technical assistance and training with the deployment of long-term advisers in selected countries and the expansion of the operations of its five Africa Regional Technical Assistance Centres and the Africa Training Institute in Mauritius.

105. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized three regional workshops, in Ethiopia, Kenya and Swaziland, and three technical cooperation projects, in Angola, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, to support national tax authorities and ministries of finance in protecting and broadening their tax bases, reaching a total of approximately 200 tax officials from 32 countries.

106. For fiscal year 2017 (July 2016–June 2017), the combined delivery of the International Development Association and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to sub-Saharan Africa amounted to $11.7 billion, while $2.6 billion of IBRD assistance was provided to North Africa. The International Finance Corporation committed $3.7 billion in new long-term financing and mobilization to the continent, and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency provided guarantees of $1 billion to sub-Saharan African countries.[1]

107. In August 2017, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the African Union Commission, UNDP, the World Bank and Japan organized the ministerial meeting of the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development to follow up on the progress of the commitments of $30 billion made at the fifth and sixth Conferences, in 2013 and 2016. The meeting promoted high-level policy dialogue between Africa and its partners and contributed to the mobilization of support for a wide range of development initiatives.

108. In December 2017, at the eleventh session of the WTO Ministerial Conference, the Enhanced Integrated Framework benefited from a $23-million contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, bringing total Enhanced

[1] The International Development Association is the World Bank's concessional financing window; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development provides finance to middle-income countries; the International Finance Corporation is the private sector arm of the World Bank Group; and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency provides insurance guarantees against political risk for investments.

Integrated Framework resources for African least developed countries to $115 million for 2016–2022.

C. Cross-cutting issues

109. In November 2017, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs launched, at the round-table conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management, an initiative to mainstream the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals into the curricula and training courses of public administration schools in Africa, mainly to equip public servants with the skills and competencies to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

110. WTO and UNCTAD provided support to the African group of WTO, including on technical and policy guidance and substantive analyses in line with the beneficial integration of African member States into the multilateral trading system and to facilitate their participation and the participation of officials of the African Union Commission in the eleventh session of the WTO Ministerial Conference.

111. In 2017, IAEA awarded 519 fellowships, made 95 scientific visits and provided 148 training courses to African countries. For instance, under its project on promoting the sustainability and networking of national nuclear institutions for development, representatives of 12 African countries were trained in the development and implementation of strategic action plans to help to promote peaceful applications of nuclear techniques.

112. UNWTO and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Ghana organized an intensive executive course to help to equip officials and professionals of the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo with state of the art tourism marketing tools to enhance the tourism experience at African destinations.

113. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNCTAD, UNODC, UN-Habitat, UNEP, ECA, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have been implementing a programme on statistics and data to strengthen the capacity of African countries to accurately measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs continued to help Ethiopia and Rwanda to build and strengthen their national statistical and geospatial capacities, including through projects on enhancing national statistical capacity to measure, monitor, assess and report on progress on achieving targets for sustainable development, expected to be concluded at the end of June 2018.

114. In January 2018, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, ECA, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the African Union Commission organized a workshop in New York on the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for African Member States. The workshop contributed to raising awareness about the Regional Forum in the lead up to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and to enhancing coordination among the global, regional and national levels in following up on the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda in Africa.

D. Institutional support

115. To strengthen the institutional capacity of NEPAD to deliver on environmental programmes in Africa, UNEP and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency are establishing the Africa Environment Partnership Platform to promote sustainable environmental management on the continent.

116. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa supported the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in developing and implementing its strategy for skills and employment for young people. The aim of the strategy is to identify and promote effective, innovative and evidence-based strategies and interventions to tackle the youth employment challenge by leveraging knowledge, partnerships and domestic and international resources to maximize the value of youth employment investments, scale up action and increase impact at the local, national and regional levels.

117. Following the decision of the African Union in 2017 to expand the mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism to include the monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNAIDS supported the repositioning of the Mechanism as an innovative tool for sharing best practices on health epidemics and supporting country reviews through country-level engagement including all key stakeholders. In January 2018, UNAIDS and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights launched the first-ever report on human rights, HIV and health by an organ of the African Union. UNAIDS also helped the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to establish a health situation room for disease surveillance and reporting across the continent, notably in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

118. In 2017, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN-Women supported the African Union in organizing a number of high-level events on ending child marriage, which leveraged further political commitment to ending the practice in Africa.

119. UNCTAD assisted the African Union in finalizing its trade facilitation strategy and supported the establishment of national trade facilitation committees at the national and regional levels across the continent.

E. Challenges and constraints

120. Resource constraints, weak inter-cluster collaboration and communication and the lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation framework are major challenges for the full implementation of the business plans of the clusters and capacity-building support.

121. The operationalization of the new cluster system will require enhanced coordination and resources to support the joint and integrated implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

122. While the United Nations is embarking on comprehensive reforms in the areas of development, peace and security, it has continued to provide substantial support to the priority areas of NEPAD at both the global and the regional levels through the Regional Coordination Mechanism-Africa, the funding of programmes and projects,

capacity-building and institution-building activities, policy advisory services, resource mobilization, advocacy and humanitarian assistance.

123. Progress was made towards regional integration with the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market and the Continental Free Trade Area in January and March 2018, respectively. The United Nations system should further support regional integration, the implementation of the Continental Free Trade Area and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, finance, market integration and projects under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, with particular attention to energy and renewable energy.

124. During the review period, the United Nations strengthened its partnership with the African Union through the signing of two joint cooperation frameworks: the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, in April 2017, and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, in January 2018. The latter aims to support the inclusive growth and sustainable development of Africa through joint activities and programmes to accelerate the coordinated and integrated implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. It is imperative to ensure the complementarity of the two joint frameworks on peace and development to further reinforce the nexus between peace, security and development. With this unity of purpose, the United Nations system should further enhance coordination and support the implementation of the peace, security, development and human rights pillars to ensure that no one is left behind.

125. In the second year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, the United Nations system took steps to enhance coordination and support for the joint, integrated implementation and monitoring of both development frameworks in Africa. The United Nations monitoring mechanism continued to monitor the commitments made towards Africa's development through its various regional stakeholders' meetings. The United Nations system should further support the domestication, mainstreaming and implementation processes at the regional, national and local levels and leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships to support the effective implementation of both agendas.

126. In support of the African Union theme for 2018, "Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa's transformation" the United Nations system should strengthen its coordination and enhance its support for the acceleration of the implementation of all commitments relating to the theme in their support to Africa.

127. The United Nations system should enhance its support for the promotion of governance, conflict prevention, peace, security, stability and human rights in Africa, notably by further enhancing coordination and cooperation with the African Union and the regional economic communities and strengthening their capacities in the areas of early warning and conflict prevention, meditation and conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development. It is also crucial to continue to support the efforts of the African Peer Review Mechanism to promote political, socioeconomic and corporate governance, the initiative to silence the guns in Africa by 2020 and African efforts to tackle emerging threats to peace and security, including terrorism, forced migration and trafficking in persons.

128. In order to encourage diversification, value addition and the integration of the global value chain, the United Nations system should continue to enhance its support for the development of productive capacity in Africa and support the implementation of the third Industrial Development Decade for Africa, 2016–2025.

129. With a view to ensuring environmental sustainability, nutrition and food security, the United Nations system should enhance its support for the implementation of all pillars of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, in particular in the areas of food security and nutrition, rural development, agribusiness and climate-smart agriculture.

130. The United Nations system should continue to support programmes that will create decent work for all, with special emphasis on women, young people, persons with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons.

131. The United Nations system should enhance its support for the empowerment of young people in Africa, notably through the implementation of the plan of action for the African Youth Decade, 2009–2018, and the NEPAD strategy for skills and employment for youth.

132. As the end of the African Women's Decade, 2010–2020, approaches, the United Nations system should enhance its support for the acceleration of the implementation of global and regional decisions and commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

133. The United Nations system should strengthen its support towards addressing climate change in Africa by prioritizing adaptation and mitigation through the development of skills, the transfer and use of relevant technology, including space-based technology, and the provision of financial and technical resources.